

Gal 10 0 a

Practical OBSERVATIONS
UPON THE
MIRACLES
OF OUR
Blessed Saviour.

TOGETHER
With some other extraordinary
Passages of his Life.

V O L. II.

BY
FRANCIS BRAGGE, B. D.
Vicar of *Hitchin*, and Prebendary of
Lincoln.

*And many other Signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his
Disciples, which are not written in this Book :
But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is
the Christ, the Son of God, and that Believing, ye
might have Life through his Name. Joh. 20. 30, 31.*

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®

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

TO THE

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM

Lord Bishop of Lincoln

My Lord,

THE
OF
presented to
late your Lordship's predecessor
in this See, and favourably Re-
ceiv'd by him; and Your being
design'd for the same Honour, had
God been pleas'd to have continu'd
him till this Time amongst
us: It now waits upon your
Lordship, with the greatest Re-
spect, to whom the Veneration
and



T O

The Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM

Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*.

My Lord,

THE *first* Volume of these
Observations having been
presented to that Excellent Pre-
late your Lordship's Predecessor
in this *See*, and favourably Re-
ceiv'd by him; and *This* being
design'd for the same Honour, had
God been pleas'd to have conti-
nu'd him till this Time amongst
us: It now waits upon your
Lordship, with the greatest Re-
spect, to whom the Veneration

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and Duty that I ow'd to him, are now transferr'd; and whose known Piety and Learning render you so Worthy to succeed Him.

Your Lordship is now, by Divine Providence, entred upon a charge of very great Burthen and Extent, which can't but take up much of your Time, and many of your Thoughts; but the great Good you will do in it, will, to your Lordship, be an ample Recompence; and I hope, and do not doubt but you will find, so ready an Obedience from your Clergy, so conscientious a Discharge of their several Duties, and such a constant Expression upon all Occasions, of the great Value they ought to have for you, upon account of your own *Personal Worth*, as well as of the *venerable Character* you bear, and the *Relation* they

The Epistle Dedicatory.

they stand in to you; as will
sweeten the Trouble that must
needs attend the Government of
so large a Diocese as this.

To which, as your Lordship will
be an Ornament, and a Blessing, so
may you see the happy Fruit of your
Vigilance and Care in the plenti-
ful Increase of true Religion, both
in your Clergy, and your People!

To contribute something to-
wards which most desirable End,
in the Station I am in, as it hath
been hitherto, so still shall be,
the sincere Endeavour of

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most Humble and

Obedient Servant,

Francis Bragge.

TO THE
READER.

I Should not have said any thing by way of Preface to this Second Volume, but that there are some few Passages of our Blessed Saviour's Life consider'd in it, which not being Miracles, may seem to be improperly thrust in, when it might have been compleated with those that are so.

Now, if there be any need of an Apology for this, you may please to consider, that tho' several of our Lord's Miracles are indeed past by, which I might have discours'd of as well as of the rest; yet, they being so very much like those that either in this or the first Volume have been the Subject of our Meditations, I was loath to tire your Patience with a needless Repetition of what I had observ'd elsewhere, and chose rather to insert three or four other extraordinary Occurrences instead of them; which, tho' not strictly Miraculous, are yet very wonderful, (which is pretty near of Kin) and such as can't but fill us with Admiration when we duly Ponder them, and give us a most awful Idea of our great Master's Divine Pow-

To the Reader.

Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, and are full of Instruction in the most concerning Truths, relating to good Life.

If they answer this Character, they'll be sufficiently agreeable to the Main Design of this Undertaking; and then, what I have said to excuse my putting them into this Volume, may be thought to be more than was needful.

However it has not spent much of that Time, which I hope will be better employ'd in the Serious perusal of the Book it self; which, as 'tis sent abroad into the World, in hopes that it may do some good, so I humbly recommend it to God's Blessing for its wisd^d & Success!

THE

Power

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Practical OBSERVATIONS Vol. II.

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

I.

*Our Saviour's Miraculous Fast
and Temptation in the
Wilderness.*

MAT. iv. 1, &c.

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the
Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.*

*And when he had fasted forty days and forty
nights he was afterwards an hungred.*

WHEN the blessed Jesus
began to be about thirty Luk. 3. 23.
years of age, in his full Vi-
gour both of Body and
Mind; having spent the intermediate
time of his Life in obscure privacy,
B known

Vol. II. known to no body but those of his near Neighbourhood, employ'd, probably, in the mean Calling of *Joseph* his reputed Father (for *Idle* to be sure he was

Job. 7. 15. not, and the Scripture intimates that he was not brought up to Learning) but withal, in great esteem for his extraordinary Piety and Holiness of Life, his sweetness of Temper, and innocent

Luk. 2. 52. prudent Behaviour, growing in *Wisdom* as he did in *Stature*, which rendred him the Favourite both of God and Man, (as 'twill do any of us *now*, be our Circumstances otherwise never so poor and low :) His Fore-runner, *John* the Baptist, was mov'd by the Spirit of God to leave his Retirement in the mountainous, woody part of *Judea*, where he was born, and had hitherto liv'd, and come down to the more frequented Places about *Jordan*, and prepare the way of the Lord by Preaching the Baptism of Repentance for remission of sins, and warning the People that the Kingdom of Heaven, or of the Messiah, was at hand. And in a short time, great

Mar 3. 5, 6. Multitudes of all Conditions flock'd thither to him, and were baptized of him confessing their sins. And, while they were full of Thought concerning him, whether

whether he were the *Christ* or no, which Vol. II.
 he plainly told them all he was not, but *Luk. 3. 15.*
 so much below him as not to be *worthy*
to unloose the Latchet of his Shoes, and *16, 17.*
 whose Baptism and Preaching should
 be far superior to his; Jesus himself
 came to him to be baptiz'd of him:
 And tho' the Baptist, at his first offer-
 ing himself, did not know him (and
 publicly declar'd he did not, that the
 People might not think they combin'd
 together to deceive the World) the *Joh. 1. 31,*
 manner of *John's* Life in the lonely So- *33.*
 litudes of the *Hill-Country* secluding him
 from the Acquaintance even of his near
 Relations that liv'd at any considerable
 distance off, as Jesus did, who was
 brought up at *Nazareth*; yet the Spirit
 of God immediately reveal'd to him
 who he was, and then, as struck with
 a sacred Awe and Veneration, he desir'd
 to be excus'd from doing that to *him*
 which he knew he had no need of, and
 would look like assuming some degree of
 Superiority over one who was so infi-
 nitely to be preferr'd before him: And
 then, with great Humility said to him,
I have need to be baptiz'd of thee, and *Mat. 3. 14.*
comest thou to me?

Vol. II. But upon Jesus pressing him to do it, to whom he knew he ought to be obedient, and withal, telling him the Reason, that *thus it became them to fulfil all Righteousness*; that is, as I suppose, to pay Obedience to that part of the Law of *Moses*, as well as the rest, which commanded that the Priests at their Consecration should be *wash'd with Water* (and he was the High-Priest of the Christian Church) and then enter upon their Office; he comply'd: And according to the prevailing Custom among the Jews of being initiated by Baptism into any new Institution, and when they gave themselves up to the Discipline of any famous Master, Jesus was baptiz'd by *John*. Thus our Lord shew'd that he approv'd of the Baptism of *John*, and likewise adopted that Ceremony into his own Religion, which he came to teach the World, and recommended and hallow'd it by his own Example, *Suffer it to be so now, &c.* As if he had said, 'As it is your Office to *prepare the way before me*, by proclaiming the near approach of my Kingdom, and by teaching the necessity of Repentance in order to Mens admission into it, to render them more
'apt

‘ apt to receive my Doctrin, and more Vol. II.
 ‘ ready to believe in me as the pro-
 ‘ mised Messias ; and to fix them the
 ‘ firmer in such Faith, solemnly to ad-
 ‘ mit them as *your* Disciples by the Rite
 ‘ of Baptism, in order to their being
 ‘ *mine* hereafter: So it becomes me to
 ‘ shew my Approbation of all this, by
 ‘ doing as others do in this Matter, and
 ‘ encourage every Man by my Exam-
 ‘ ple, to do for the future as I have done
 ‘ before him ; and make no scruple of be-
 ‘ ing initiated by this Ceremony, into
 ‘ that new Religion which I am come to
 ‘ plant in the World. *Thus it becomes*
 ‘ *us not to destroy* any part of, *but to fulfil*
 ‘ *all Righteousness*, and by your baptiz-
 ‘ ing me, and my submitting to that
 ‘ ancient Rite, to bring it to its due
 ‘ and design’d Perfection, and make it
 ‘ the standing *initiatory* Sacrament of
 ‘ the Christian Church for ever.

Now, when Jesus for these Reasons
 was baptiz’d in *Jordan*, for being per-
 fectly Spotless and without Guilt, there
 was no other occasion for it ; *he went* Luk. 3. 21.
up straitway out of the Water, and while
 he was *Praying*, as Baptism is an espe-
 cial Act of religious Worship, and the
 most vigorous Devotion never more

Vol. II. requisite than then, in the Person baptiz'd (if capable of it) and in every Body else that is assisting at that sacred

Mat. 3. 16. Office; *Lo the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw, and so did the Baptist, and others probably that stood by, the*

Joh. 1. 33, 34. *Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him, in some very re-*

Luk. 3. 22. *markable visible appearance, and lo, a Voice from Heaven; and which no doubt was loud enough for every one present to hear, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

Thus gloriously was our great High Priest, our Prophet, and our King, Proclaimed from Heaven. Thus was he Consecrated to be the unchangeable, eternal Priest of the Christian Church; thus was he solemnly Anointed to be our Prophet and our King, by the Unction that is from above, whereby he was declar'd to be *holy, harmless, separate from Sinners, and enabled to save to the utmost, or most effectually, all such as should come to God by him.* Thus was he Inaugurated with full Power, and in a most awful and majestick manner, into his Mediatorial Office; God audibly declaring, that in and through him alone, he would be reconciled to sinful Mankind.

This

This great Solemnity being over, Vol. II. Jesus, *being full of the Holy Ghost*, his Mind replenish'd with the most noble Thoughts and Designs relating to the discharge of his high Office; return'd from *Jordan*, and by a strong Impulse of that Divine Spirit was immediately led into the *Wilderness*, or the most desert, unfrequented part of that mountainous Country, where *St. John the Baptist* spent his time before. And this for a twofold Reason. Partly, that he might recollect himself, and consider the great weight of the Work he was then to undertake, and lay a Scheme of his management of it, and arm himself before-hand with Resolution to undergo the Difficulties he should meet with in its Prosecution, and be often in Prayer to his Divine Father for his constant Blessing and Assistance: And partly, with heroick Bravery, as the Champion of Mankind, to enter the Lists in single Combat with our infernal Enemy, who he knew beforehand would there be ready to assault him; that thereby he might know his utmost Strength and Cunning, and be the more ready to pity and to succour us, when we are tempted by him,

Vol. II. being acquainted by his own experience with his great subtilty and force; and at length gain such a compleat Conquest over him, and at the same time shew us how we may conquer him too, that he shall not be able to vanquish any Christian for the future, without his own base Cowardice, and Consent.

As for the *first* Reason of our Lord's retiring into the Wilderness after his Baptism, that he might be undisturb'd in his Devotions and Holy Thoughts, and being lost to the World for some time, converse the more freely with his Heavenly Father; it teaches us how highly requisite it is, when we are entring into any new state of Life, or way of Employment that is of any moment, to spend some time first, in Privacy and Retirement, that we may have leisure to consider, and reflect upon what we are going about, to form good Resolutions of discharging our Duty faithfully, and prudently to be-think our selves before-hand of the Tryals and Difficulties we may meet with in it, and frame to our selves such a Method of Acting as may probably be the most successful; and then

recom-

recommend our sincere Endeavours to Vol. II.
the Blessing of God, with fervent
Prayer, begging his Aid and Assist-
ance, as that which is all in all.

And the more unalterable the state
is, as *Matrimony* suppose and *Holy Or-
ders*, and the greater consequence the
Business is of that we are to be engaged
in, as the several degrees of Magistra-
cy and share in the Administration of
the Government, whether of Church
or State; the more need is there of
such *Forethought* and most serious Pre-
paration, in such a Recess from Busi-
ness and Noise, as may render us whol-
ly Masters of our Selves and our
Thoughts, that we may Think, and
Meditate, and Pray, as intensely and
with as little Interruption as is pos-
sible.

I doubt the neglect of this wise and
religious Course has been one great
Reason that so many have done amiss
in their several Stations and Ways of
Life: And for want of weighing their
Duty and their Ability before-hand,
and comparing their Genius with their
Business, and duly considering all other
Circumstances, have been guilty of
strange Mismanagement, and prov'd
unable

Vol. II. unable to rub through the Hardships, and resist the Temptations they have met with; and having rashly ventur'd upon any thing, and gone on with inconsiderate Heat (and it may be upon very undue regards) without consulting either Themselves, their Friends, or God; have brought upon themselves not only a great deal of *Vexation* and *Disgrace*, but *Guilt*; besides infinite scandal to Religion, and much damage to the Publick, and every particular Person too, with whom they have been concern'd.

And what likelihood is there of Mens going on well, when they begin at such a rate as this? When 'tis not a conscientious discharge of their Duty that they design, as in the sight of God, to whom at last they must give an Account; but the Gratification of their *Lust*, their *Ambition*, or their *Avarice*, is all they aim at.

How much therefore does it concern us, in all the great Turns and Changes of our Lives, to follow the Steps of our wise and holy Master, and to retire and consider first, and look well to the nature of what we are entering upon, and the Obligations it will lay upon

upon us, and bethink our selves how Vol. II.
we shall be able to discharge them ;
and rectify our Aims and Intentions,
purposing nothing but what is honest
and honourable, and purposing that
heartily, and with the firmest Resolu-
tion of never departing from it, by the
Grace and Help of God, which we must
never fail to beg with earnest Importu-
nity and great Devotion.

This is the way to do God and the
Publick real Service, in any publick
Station, and to render every private
Condition as happy as Prudence and
Innocence can make it. 'Twill make
our Minds comfortable and easy here,
and our future Account at our great
Audit such as will pass that strict Scrutiny,
which then we must all undergo :
And 'tis the only way to give us a *good*
Name and Reputation in this World,
and make our Prosperity well-relishing
and lasting.

Good God ! that Men of Sense and
Years, should ever miss of such
Thoughts as these, and of acting ac-
cording to them, when 'tis so easy and
so natural thus to Think, and Do, and
so much depends upon it !

Those

Vol. II. Those that have hitherto been thus Thoughtless and Inconsiderate, would do well to make what Amends they can for what has been wanting formerly, by now immediately applying themselves to serious Consideration, according to what their several Circumstances require; and which, tho' late, will yet be of very happy consequence, and put them upon a faithful discharge for the future, of what they owe to God, their Country, their Neighbours, and Themselves; all which must certainly be accounted for at last.

But if 'tis a more particular Dedication of our selves to Religion, which we are entering upon, whether in the Office of the Ministry, or in the more general Capacity of a Christian, either in the susception of Baptism, if it has been neglected till we are arriv'd to years of Discretion, or in taking upon our selves in Confirmation, that solemn Vow, Promise and Profession, which our Sponsors made for us at our Infant-reception into the Church of Christ; or in our first taking up after a run of Vice, which we deeply repent of and are firmly resolv'd to forsake utterly, and live as becomes Disciples of the
Holy

Holy Jesus for the future: In these, Vol. II. and such-like Cases, the Course we have been recommending, such Thoughts, and such Reflections, in privacy and retirement, together with earnest Prayer, is more *especially* needful. For *then*, our great Adversary will be more than ever busy with us, and make use of all his hellish Arts to divert us from our good Intentions, and make us break our pious Resolutions and Vows, and so bring Evil out of Good, by making our best Purposes instrumental to our greater Guilt, when they prove vain and ineffective; and enslave us still more to him, by occasion of those sacred Bonds we laid upon our selves, utterly to Renounce and Abjure him, which yet, we violated, almost as soon as made.

And therefore, with great Wisdom did the Son of *Sirach* advise, *My Son, if thou come to serve the Lord, in any more eminent or remarkable Manner than ordinary, prepare thy Soul for temptation, as what must then be expected; set thine Heart aright, and constantly endure.* Guard thee with Holy Resolution, and Faith, and Prayer, and Meditation, and subdue the treacherous

Eccles. 2.
1. 2.

Vol. II. cherous Party thy Enemy hath within thy own Bosom by prudent Fasting, and Mortification of all inordinate Affection; and then, with the Sword of the Spirit in thy Hand, which is the Word of God, boldly wait his coming, and resist him vigorously, and he will be forc'd to fly from thee with Shame and Disappointment, as he did from thy Divine Champion in the Wilderness, who took this very course to quell him, and with admirable Success, as we shall now go on to shew.

For our blessed Lord had not been long in those unfrequented Solitudes, before the great Disturber of every thing that is good, began to try his Skill upon him; but first in a close *covert* way, without visibly appearing to him, and only working upon his *Fancy* and *Imagination* in such a manner as might raise troubled Thoughts, and terrifying Apprehensions in his Mind, of the vast difficulty of what he was going to engage in, the innumerable and great Dangers it would inevitably expose him to, the many Sorrows, sharp Sufferings, and shameful, tormenting Death it would bring him to at last, before he could compleat it, and the like;

like ; to see, if by this means he could Vol. II.
startle, and affright him, and make him
waver in his Resolutions, and discour-
age and divert him, from what, he
could not but know, if it went on and
succeeded, would be the ruin of his
infernal Kingdom.

And, to such melancholy, ill bod-
ing Thoughts, he might probably
think the squalidness and horror of
that Desert Place, might contribute
more than a little, and give them the
deepest Impression.

This, as we may probably suppose,
was the Devil's way of tempting, or
trying our Lord, during the forty
Days and Nights of his Fast ; and ma-
ny opportunities no doubt he had in
so long time, by frightful Dreams when
he Slept, frequent Apparitions and
Illusions of evil Spirits in the Night,
and the uncomfortable Condition he
was in every Day, for so many Weeks
together, to affect the sweet, mild Spirit
of Jesus with unspeakable Terrors,
enough to beat him off from his intend-
ed Enterprize, had he been *meer Man*.

Whether he was so or no, 'tis gene-
rally thought Satan was yet uncertain.
That he was the promis'd great Pro-
phet

Vol. II. phet that was then expected by the Jews, he could not but know, by the completion of the Prophecies concerning the Messias in him, and by God's calling him his belov'd Son at his Baptism, with an audible Voice from Heaven like Thunder, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in so extraordinary a manner; all which so knowing a Spirit as he, tho' laps'd, can't be suppos'd to be ignorant of. But, the Myltery of *God Incarnate*, of the divine and humane Nature united in one Person, was beyond his *ken*; as it was that of the blessed Angels of Heaven, 'till it was reveal'd, and who still, we are told, *desire to look into it*, with great Wonder and Admiration.

1. Pet. 1.
12.

For had he really known, that Jesus was that eternal Son of God, now *manifested in the Flesh*, whose irresistible Power he had already so fatally experienc'd, when he threw him down from Heaven like Lightning, with all his Apostate Legions, into the lowest Hell; one can hardly think so subtle a Spirit would have been so Fool-hardy as to venture to Cope with him again, and make an Attempt, which he could not but know would be unsuccessful, and

and end in his greater Shame and Confusion. Vol. II.

It seems therefore more probable, that as yet he took him for no other than a *meer Man*, tho' the greatest of Prophets, and whose Business it was to destroy the Works and the Power of the Devil, and redeem the World from the Dominion and Punishment of Sin.

This 'twas that enrag'd Satan so much, and put him upon following him immediately into the Wilderness; that he might try what Spirit he was of, and thereby make some *Presage* what he might expect from him hereafter.

But be this how it will: From hence we may learn from whom those cursed Injections come, which would dishearten us in our progress in Religion as a thing impracticable, and full of insuperable Difficulties; those black, dismal Notions of the rigidity of God's Justice, and his inexorableness to all the World of Sinners, except some very few, whom he decreed from all Eternity to Save, and as peremptorily decreed to Damn all the rest merely to shew his Power, and make
C his

Vol. II. his wretched Creatures tremble at his Judgments.

These, and the like false and unworthy Apprehensions of God and Religion, which so evidently tend to the discouragement of true Piety and Goodness, and to make Men *presumptuous* or *desperate*, as their natural Temper inclines, both which are of very fatal Consequence; we should look upon as so many Diabolical Suggestions, to tempt us from God's Service, and resist 'em, and throw them out of our Minds with all our force, with the greatest Abhorrence and Indignation.

And from the same Infernal Tempter come those desponding Thoughts which we are apt to have, when engag'd in any excellent Design for the Honour of God and Religion, and the Publick Good. Upon every little *Rub* we conclude it not feasible, and cool and flag, and grow heartless in prospect of imaginary Difficulties; and so all falls again, and many a hopeful beginning comes to nothing through this sluggish Timorousness, which makes us Fear where no Fear is.

Like

Like the Sluggard in the *Proverbs*, Vol. II. we excuse our not proceeding any further, because there is a *Lyon in the way*; ^{Prov. 22.} ^{13.} and a Lyon indeed there is, but we don't consider that 'tis the great Infernal One, to hearken to whose Insinuations of this nature, is the ready way to be frightened from every thing that is conducive to our Happiness, and we shall run we don't know where, and do we don't know what, 'till we become a Prey to his merciless Teeth.

But the way to remove this Lyon, is boldly to defy him, and advance with still greater Vigour and Zeal; and such true Christian Bravery as this will certainly put him to Flight. And then we shall find that all those mighty Difficulties we fancy'd to our selves will vanish, and our way be not only *passable*, but smooth, and easy, and delightful.

One thing more we may observe from Satans tempting our Saviour in the *Wilderness*, and that is, that no state of Life here below is free from Temptation; and that which seems to secure us from it most, a recess from the World in Solitude and Privacy, where we have nothing to do but to

Vol. II. Read, and Meditate, and Pray; often proves a more dangerous Scene of it than the common way of Living.

Not but that such Retirements *sometimes* are of excellent Use, and a great many pious Persons do make that good use of them; but then, we must have a care of placing too much *Confidence* in the Holiness and Safety of such Retreats, as we know the Church of *Rome* does, and be then more upon our guard than ordinary: Lest instead of those Temptations from the *World*, which by that means we hope to avoid, we meet with others that are worse; and fall into Melancholy and Enthusiasm, excessive Dejections, and it may be Despair; or else grow Sullen and Morose, and Censorious, bloated up with spiritual Pride, and carry'd we don't know whither by Presumption.

And therefore, I can't but think a *mix'd* way of Life, such as our Saviour liv'd, sometimes *in* the *World*, as our Employments lead us, and sometimes *out* of it, that we may compose our Minds to that Seriousness and Tranquility which becomes those that are in pursuit of infinitely better Things in a future State, and for the more advantageous

vantagious exercife of the Duties of Vol. II.
Devotion; ſuch a mix'd way of Life
as this, I take to be much more benefi-
cial, not only to Society and the Pub-
lick, but to every particular Perſon,
than ſuch a *total* reſeſs, whether into
Cells in Monafteries, or into the unfre-
quented Solitudes of deſert Places, as has
been ſo exceſſively magnified by ſome.

Thus have we conſider'd in what
manner the Devil tempted our Lord
during his long Faſt in the Wilderneſs,
before he appeared viſibly to him, and
play'd his great Batteries upon him;
that is, as he is wont to tempt us now,
by caſting evil Suggeſtions into our
Minds.

But is not this to allow him too great
Power, to ſuppoſe him able thus to in-
fluence our *Thoughts*? And don't we
thereby throw upon him the Odium of
more Miſchief than he is capable of
doing? Does not this look as if he had
broke his Chain, and rang'd about
without controul, and by a kind of
Poſſeſſion, and that of the worſt ſort,
had acceſs to our very *Minds*, and
might command them as he pleaſed,
which us'd to be look'd upon as pecu-
liar to God?

Vol. II. All, I think, that is needful to be said in Answer to this, is, That the Devil's Power is certainly very great, tho' we can't say how far it will reach; and being a *Spirit*, no doubt but he can act upon Spirits, tho' we are not able to say *how*. And that he hath actually done so, we are assur'd from Scripture; as when we are told that *Satan* provok'd *David* to number *Israel*, by which must be meant that he put those Thoughts into his Head, and by often renewing them, and backing 'em with plausible Reasons, at length persuaded him to do so. And in the 13th of St. *John's* Gospel, vers. 2. the vile treachery of *Judas* to his Master is ascrib'd to the Devils having *put it into his Heart to betray him*. And when *Ananias* gave a false Account to St. *Peter* of the Price for which he sold his Land for the Service of the Church, the Apostle said to him, *Why hath Satan fill'd*
Act. 5. 3. thine Heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?

Which Instances shew plainly that the Devil can inject evil Thoughts and Purposes into our Minds, and in that secret, undiscernable manner tempt us to Wickedness. But all is by God's Permission, and how far that extends we

we know not; but this we are sure of, Vol. II. that the Devil can't go beyond it in the least, as is evident in the Case of *Job*: And if we do what becomes us in resisting him, we may depend upon it that God will not suffer him to tempt us *beyond what we are able, but with the Temptation will make some way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* As in the Instance of *St. Peter*, when Satan desired to have so much Power over him as to *sift him as Wheat*, to try him to the bottom, and was permitted so to do, and prevail'd very sadly upon him; yet his blessed Master's Prayers for him preserv'd his Faith from failing totally, and gave him sufficient Strength to recover himself, and beat off the Tempter at last: And in a little time after, he was as great an instance of Courage and Constancy in the Christian Cause, as he was before of wretched Cowardice and Fear.

When therefore God is pleas'd to lead us into Temptation (and which is always for wise and good ends) and gives the Devil leave either in this secret way, or by more open Assaults to try his Skill upon us; tho' he may sometimes foil us, and his Stratagems

Vol. II. be successful, yet if we manfully do what in us lies to resist him, he shall not *finally* prevail ; but if we are treacherous to our selves, and side with the Tempter, and suffer our selves to be led away and intic'd by our Lusts, 'till we fall into those Snares of his which otherwise we might have avoided ; the Case is alter'd, and we can't expect God should deliver us from those Evils, which with a heedless Presumption we run our selves into.

Now in this *lonely*, and through the disturbance the Devil gave him, *uncomfortable Abode* of Jesus in the Wilderness, St. Mark mentions one thing that *we* should think very terrible, his being *with the wild Beasts*, which the desert Places of that Country were full of. And such Companions, in such a Place, to one unarm'd and unguarded as Jesus was, would have been as terrifying and as dangerous to him as to us, were there not some great difference between us and him. But he was forty Days and Nights with them, without receiving or *fearing* any Injury from them, as we may believe by his so *long* stay in those unfrequented Places where they had their Haunts.

Now

Now what was the reason of this? In Vol. II. short, Jesus was perfectly holy and innocent, free from all stain of Sin and Guilt, as *Adam* was in *Paradice* before he fell; and therefore as to the *first Adam* in his state of Innocence they were, by the will of the great Creator, intirely subject, harmless and governable, as to their Sovereign Lord; so were they to this *second Adam*, whose Innocence was without Spot and Blemish, and his Dignity far greater than his to whom they were at first made to be serviceable and obedient.

So that this Inoffensiveness of the fiercest Beasts of Prey to the blessed Jesus, tho' all alone in the midst of them and without Defence, proceeded from an extraordinary Awe they had upon them in his sacred Presence; and whose Behaviour too among them was such, as betray'd no Fear of them, but shew'd a Majestick *Superiority* over them, which kept them at a distance.

This looks like a recovery of *Paradice*, and the state of Innocence, and a general Reconciliation of Mankind to God and the whole Creation; a removing of all Enmity, and the commencement of a Reign of universal Peace

Vol. II. Peace and Love; according to that Prophecy of *Isaiab*, when he spake of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, that Prince of Peace; the *Wolf*, says he, shall dwell with the *Lamb*, and the *Leopard* shall lie down with the *Kid*, and the *Calf* and the young *Lyon*, and the *Fatling* together, and a young *Child* shall lead them: They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain.

Isa. 11. 5.

Thus would it have been literally, had not the first *Adam* sin'd; and thus ought it to be in a spiritual Sense, under the peaceful Government of the second *Adam*, who came to bring *Glory* to God on high, on Earth Peace, and good Will among Men.

How displeasing then must it needs be to him, to see the event, by our perverse Wickedness, so contrary to his gracious Design! Let us therefore learn of him to be Meek and Lowly, Holy and Undefil'd, Harmless and Innocent our Selves, and then his overruling Providence will soften the Spirits of others towards us. He will restrain the Malice of our Enemies, and in the midst of Wolves, and Tygers, and Lyons, give us Safety, Tranquility and Peace. For who is he that will harm

1 Pet. 3.

13.

harm you, says the Apostle, *if ye be Followers of that which is good?* Vol. II.

But how great was the Concern of the blessed *Virgin* all this while, when for so many Weeks together she miss'd her divine Son, in whom all her Happiness, and that of all the World too, was bound up! And now that the time was come when he should enter upon the great Work he was born for, and appear in publick, he was gone no Body knew whither, and no Tidings could be heard of him, as most probably there could not, he withdrawing himself immediately after he was baptiz'd into the Heart of an unfrequented Desert, a great way off from *Nazareth*, and which might easily be done without the notice of any one, in such a Crowd of People as were then got together at *Jordan*: And we may believe that he design'd thus to slip away unobserv'd, that he might not be found out and disturb'd in his recess. How full of Trouble and doubtful Suspence, of Fears and melancholly ill-boding Thoughts, may we imagine the blessed *Virgin* was, under such a Tryal as this!

This

Vol.II. This could not but bring to her Mind what was said by old *Simeon* to her, when she presented him in the Temple, *A Sword shall pierce through thy own Soul also.* She now experienc'd the Truth of that Prediction, tho' this indeed was but the beginning of those Sorrows, which should pierce her deeper still hereafter.

She had been in two great Frights for him before; when she was fain to fly with him in great haste into *Egypt* in his tender Infancy, to avoid the barbarous Cruelty of *Herod*, who thirsted for his Blood; and some years after, when she lost him for three Days, as she was returning from the Celebration of the Passover at *Jerusalem*.

This last was a Tryal of the same nature with that we are now speaking of, tho' of a much shorter continuance; and if she then sought him sorrowing, how much more afflicted was she by his unaccountable absence now for forty days together, when a fruitless search for him so long might make her almost despair of ever seeing him again!

But tho' the Tryal was very great, and enough to shock the firmest Faith,
and

and exceed the greatest Patience ; yet Vol. II.
the Supports she had from above, were,
doubtless, proportionable : She could
never have born up else under such a
weight of Sorrow, which yet was not
comparable to what she afterwards
felt, when he was betray'd into the
Hands of his implacable Enemies, and
us'd by them most inhumanly and
crucify'd. But even then we find she
did not *sink* under the Load, but bore
up, as she did now, with Faith and
Patience, and Hope, through the pow-
erful Aid of the Divine Comforter,
without whose Help it would have
been impossible.

Thus we see those that are most dear
to God are sometimes exercis'd with
the severest Tryals, that they may be
conformable to the Image of their suffer- *Rom. 8. 29.*
ing Saviour, but always supported un-
der them by the Divine Assistance, and
in due time delivered from them ; to
the great increase of their Comfort and
Joy in this World, and of Glory in the
next. They are try'd like Gold in the
Furnace, that they may become *Ves-*
sels of greater *Honour*, and shine
brighter both here, and to all Eternity
in Heaven.

Where-

Vol. II. Wherefore, let us not *Despond*, but rather, as St. James adviseth, *Count it all Joy when we fall into divers Tryals and Temptations*, looking upon it as an Argument of God's Love to us; and consequently believing and hoping to the end, till the times of refreshing shall come, and which will certainly come in due Season.

Rom. 12.
6, 7.

And then, those that thus suffer'd with Jesus and his holy Mother, and all the blessed, tho' afflicted Company, of Saints, and Confessors, and Martyrs here, shall all be glorify'd together, in the Regions of everlasting Bliss.

The next Thing that offers it self to be consider'd, is our Lord's continual *Fasting*, during his Forty Days retirement in the Wilderness.

The divine Impulse that carry'd him thither was so strong, and probably so suddain and unexpected too, that he had no Thought what Provision he should have there, and very likely did not at first intend to stay so long in those barren Solitudes, as afterwards he did.

In such supernatural *Raptures*, the Person is transported as 'twere out of him-

himself, and with St. Paul, can scarce Vol. II.
tell whether he is *in or out of the Body*; ^{2 Cor. 12.}
whose little Concerns are intirely dis-^{2.}
regarded by him 'till the Rapture is
over, and Nature returns to its ordi-
nary State. And thus it was then with
our Lord.

For the Text, as express'd by St.
Mark and St. Luke, put together, re-
presents it thus: And Jesus, after his
Baptism, *Return'd from Jordan, and be-* ^{Mar. 1. 12.}
ing full of the Holy Ghost, immediately the
Spirit driveth him into the Wilderness. ^{Luke 4. 1.}
Which are Words that plainly signify
the suddainness and great Force of the
Divine Impulse upon him; (which was
the Case of the Prophets of old) and then
'tis said, that when he had fasted forty
Days and forty Nights, *he afterwards*
hungred. Then, his natural Appetite
and Desire of Food return'd, which
before was suspended by the vehement
Transport he was in; and in the mean
time Nature supported without its
usual nourishment by the Power of
God.

So that 'tis evident, this long Fast
of our Lord's was supernatural and mi-
raculous, as that of *Moses* and *Elias*
was, which were of the same continu-
ance,

Vol. II. *ance*, and therefore is by no means to be drawn into a Precedent, and made matter of our imitation. And some imprudently zealous People, that have in this Case pretended to follow Christ's Example too close, and carry their Fasts with great Severity to an excessive length, have soon felt the sad effects of their Folly and Presumption.

Fasting is no doubt of excellent use, especially in time of Temptation, be the Instance what it will; tho' in some Cases, and to some Persons, it is more directly serviceable than to others. It makes the Body more tame and obedient to the Mind; does mightily wean us from the World, and raises Devotion to the highest pitch; and thereby engages the Spirit of God to be in a more especial manner present with us, to shield us from the Assaults of the Tempter.

But then it must be manag'd with Discretion, as every Mans Constitution will bear, and his Circumstances require; and esteem'd only as an *Instrumental* Duty of no intrinsic Holiness or Value in it self, any further than 'tis conducive to the Mortification of Sin, and the improvement of
our

our Souls in that which is true Reli- Vol. II.
gion. Otherwise, 'twill soon become
a Matter of meer *Form* and Ostenta-
tion, and degenerate into *Superstition*
and *Enthusiasm*, to the Ruin of that Re-
ligion which 'tis pretended to serve
and advance.

The more we are really got above
the World, the more heavenly our Affe-
ctions are, the more obedient our Flesh
is to the Spirit, and the nearer we ar-
rive to Evangelical Perfection; the less
need is there of Fasting, and Bodily
Austerities. *While the Bridegroom is*
thus *with us*, and Jesus dwells in *us* by Mat. 9. 15.
his Spirit and his Grace, and we in
him by Obedience and Love; while
there is this happy *Concord* and *Union*
between Christ and his Disciples, what
occasion is there for a Scene of Morti-
fication? 'Twould be unseasonable
and preposterous, for that's the pro-
per season of spiritual Joy and Tri-
umph. But when the *Bridegroom is*
withdrawn, either because we are un-
worthy of his Presence, by reason of
our unchristian Behaviour, or by way
of Tryal, that he may prove the Sin-
cerity of our Love to him by our Grief
for his Absence, and earnest seeking
D him

Vol. II. him, and importunate begging for his return ; then indeed is the time for *the Children of the Bride-chamber to Fast*, and Mourn, and Lament, and Punish themselves by Acts of Spiritual Discipline.

This I have mention'd, by no means to disparage Fasting upon due occasion, but only to shew what little Reason some Hereticks of old, and the Church of *Rome* now hath, to value themselves so highly as they do upon their frequent and long Fasts, and make them an Argument of the Perfection of that State of Life above all other, which makes most use of them ; whereas we see 'tis directly contrary. And for any to esteem themselves or others the more, meerly for things of this nature, betrays more Ignorance than true Devotion, and favours more of the *Pharisee*, than the genuine Disciple of Jesus.

Mat. 6. 16.

Luk. 18. 11

But because we are fluctuating and uncertain in our Religion, and our Piety is ebbing and flowing more or less continually ; therefore the exercise of Mortification is sometimes highly needful, as occasion shall require : Of which every prudent and serious Christian is the best Judge, as far as concerns

cerns himself only, and our Governors Vol. II. with respect to what is more publick; whose Orders and Directions in this Matter ought to be conscientiously observ'd. But still, as I said, no further Value put upon them than as an Instrumental Duty, in order to what is of far greater Excellence and Consequence, the weakning of the Power of Sin in us, and the Advancement of true Piety and Holiness, in which alone pure and undefil'd Christianity consists. But to proceed.

No sooner was our Lord releas'd from the Transport he was in, and began to feel the effects of his long Fast in Emptiness and Faintness, and a keen Sense of Hunger; than Satan makes use of the opportunity, as a very fit one, to ply him with a new set of Temptations, appearing to him in a visible Form, and that probably a humane one, as the blessed Angels us'd to appear to holy Men of Old.

He could not but perceive, by what had already pass'd, that Jesus was a very extraordinary Person, and saw more and more Reason to be convinc'd that he was the Messiah that was then expected by

Vol. II. the Jewish Nation; but still he was not assur'd that he was the eternal Son of God incarnate.

The length of his Fast 'tis true was prodigious, but two meer Men had fasted as long before; and therefore he could not conclude from thence that he was more than Man.

Once more then he resolves to try him; and if he could so far prevail upon him as to persuade him to do what was in any degree sinful, his Doubts whether he was any thing more than *meer Man*, or no, would then be at an end, and he might hope by little and little to get still further Ground of him, and defeat that great Design he was going to put in Execution against *him* and his Kingdom of Darknes.

And first, he takes Advantage of the sharpness of his *Hunger*, the violent Cravings of impoverish'd Nature after a Recruit, and which in that barren desert Place, was impossible to be had without a Miracle. And therefore, in seeming Kindness advises him to take Pity on himself, and turn some of those Stones, of which there was plenty enough, tho' of nothing else, into a few Loaves of Bread to relieve his present

sent necessity, 'till he could reach some Vol. II. Town or Place of Entertainment, and have a further Supply. This, he did not question but he was able to perform, being so great a Prophet, much more *if the Son of God*; and then, why should he not? For never could there be a juster occasion than that, to exert his Power in working such a Miracle.

This was plausible enough, and the Temptation very artfully contriv'd, and opportunely laid; for Nature was wholly of his side, and pleaded strongly and almost irresistibly for him. And where would the harm be of taking his Advice? Why might not he as innocently have *then* turn'd *Stones* into *Bread*, to satisfy his own *keen* Hunger after so long a Fast; as a little after turn *Water* into *Wine*, not out of any necessity, but only to make greater plenty at a Wedding-Feast?

But Jesus, who saw his vile purpose through all his specious Pretences, gave him this confounding Answer, *It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, Deut. 8.3. but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.*

Vol. II. As if he had said, 'I perceive thy
' Design is to engage me in an Act of
' Distrust of the Providence of God
' over me in this my Necessity, and by
' extraordinary Means to procure that
' for my self, which he seems to take no
' care about, and can't be had in an
' ordinary way; and thou do'st insult-
' ingly dare me thereby to prove my
' self to be the Son of God (which
' thou wouldst tempt me likewise to
' distrust) and to shew my Divine
' Power, if I have it, in my own Pre-
' servation, lest God should forget me
' too long. But know, I'm too well
' assur'd of my being his Son, and of
' his Fatherly Care over me, to take
' any irregular Course to preserve my
' Life, tho' in never so great necessity;
' and am sure, that when I stand in so
' much need of Bread, he will, in his
' due time, give me something better
' than a Stone to feed on, without my
' betraying my Impatience and Distrust
' of his tender Regard, by turning
' these Stones into Bread. And how
' little likelihood soever there may be,
' of my subsisting much longer without
' it, God can sustain me another Forty
' days without Food, as well as those
' that

‘that are past, and then still on as Vol. II.
 ‘many more as he pleases; and those
 ‘that are obedient to him, and believe
 ‘and trust intirely in him, his Word
 ‘assures us shall never want what is
 ‘needful to support them in their great-
 ‘est and most pressing Exigencies, and
 ‘which he is able to provide for them
 ‘by ways innumerable, as he did for
 ‘vast numbers of his People in a Wil-
 ‘derness as waste and barren as this.
 ‘And therefore, in *his* Care, whose
 ‘Spirit brought me hither, do I repose
 ‘my Confidence for the Relief of my
 ‘present Hunger, whatever I may be
 ‘able to do for my self; which I shall
 ‘not so far gratify thy impious Curio-
 ‘sity, as to let thee know as yet.

To this, as cunning a Sophister as he
 was, Satan knew not what to reply;
 and therefore was resolv’d to try ano-
 ther Experiment upon him. But be-
 fore we proceed to that, we may
 hence observe, that in our lowest and
 most hopeless Circumstances, ’tis our
 Duty to trust in and depend upon God,
 to consult his Word, and rely upon it,
 and be our Necessities never so urgent,
 by no means take any Courses for a
 Supply which we cannot thoroughly

Vol. II. justify ; but conscientiously do what becomes us in the Station we are in, and then patiently wait God's time, who can turn our Stones into Bread when he pleases, and change Scarcity, and even Famine into Plenty, of which we have many Instances in the Holy Writings, and his Power and Goodness are still the same as ever.

I must confess 'tis one of the greatest of Tryals to labour under Want ; and very hard it is to Flesh and Blood, when Hunger pinches to be put to feed upon a Text of Scripture, and to cloath our selves with a Promise when we are naked : But let us think of our Lord's Example in this Matter, and duly ponder his Reasons, and we shall be satisfy'd it is the best Course we can take, as Time will assure us by a happy Experience.

When the World fails us, to engage in such Practices as will forfeit God's Blessing too, and the care of Providence, I'm sure is the height of *Folly* as well as *Irreligion*.

For the Blessing of God is all Things ; and 'tis his Hand that scatters Plenty upon the whole Creation. Whatever therefore we undergo, let us do nothing

thing to deserve our being cast off by Vol. II.
him, but every thing that is like to secure his Friendship and Protection; and then we may be sure of a Supply at length of what is needful for us, and in the mean time of such Supports as will enable us to bear up under our present Pressures, be they what they will.

And if even in our greatest Straits we must thus wait patiently upon God, and not put our Hand to any Wickedness to procure even the *Necessaries* of Life; how great must be their Guilt, who, when their Circumstances are already tollerably easy, and it may be sufficient to provide all reasonable Comforts in Moderation; are still unsatisfy'd, and stick at no ill Things that they may gratify their Pride and Luxury with the utmost Excesses! Too many such there are in the World; but I Tremble to think what Account they must give at last. But to go on.

After Satan had fail'd in his first Attempt upon our Lord, he presently attack'd him with more Violence than before, being enrag'd by his former Repulse; and being by God permitted
fo

Vol. II. so to do, in order to his divine Son's greater Glory, and Satan's greater Shame and Confusion, he hurry'd him through the Air to *Jerusalem*, which is suppos'd to be about twenty Miles from the Wilderness, and set him upon a *Pinacle of the Temple*, or the top of some *Spire* that was upon the Roof of it; and probably it was that part of it which was call'd *Herod's Tower*, which was of so vast a height, (being built upon the edge of a Rock, under which was a Valley of a prodigious depth) that, as *Josephus* tells us, *He that was on the top of the Tower and look'd down to the Valley beneath, his Head would immediately swim and grow dizzy; nay, 'twas further than his very Eyes could reach to the bottom.*

Joseph.
Antiq.
lib. 15.
cap. 4.

Now, if the top of a Pinacle upon this exceeding high Tower, was the Place where the Devil set our Saviour, we may be sure 'twas no easy standing; and to fall from thence could be no other to a meer Man than present Death. But Satan would by all means have him fear nothing, but resolutely cast himself down; for if he was the Son of God, God would take care of his beloved Son, and as the Scripture

says,

says, immediately send his Angels to *Vol. II.*
bear him up upon their Hands, or Wings,
that he might gently and safely descend, and not so much as *strike his Foot against a Stone.* And besides, the Court of the Gentiles being near this Tower, where was always a great Confluence of all sorts of People, it would tend very much to his *Honour*, and make him look'd upon as a very extraordinary Person, and very dear to God, to see him come down majestically from such a height, upon the Wings of the heavenly Host, and light in the midst of them unhurt.

Thus did the Fiend tempt our Lord; as before, to *Distrust* the Providence of God over him, so now vain-gloriously to *presume* too much upon it: and since he was for depending so intirely upon the Word of God when he was in danger of being Famish'd in the Wilderness, he quoted the same holy Word to assure him that God would send his Angels to preserve him *here* as well as *there*, tho' he should leap from that astonishing height; but withal secretly hoping that if he did so, the Fall would break his Neck.

But

Vol. II. But to his mangled Quotation, out of which he left what was not to his purpose, but very much against it, *viz. to keep thee in all thy ways, i.e. to protect thee 'in the discharge of thy Duty, and in 'the Paths that God has order'd thee to 'walk in, but not in dangerous By-ways, 'which we presumptuously run into 'without his direction; to this mangl'd misapply'd Quotation of his, (in the manner that he and his Emissaries always quote the Scripture) Jesus return'd with admirable Strength and Quickness, It is written again, Thou*
Deut. 6. 16 shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

This Text shew'd the true meaning of that other which Satan abus'd to very evil Purposes; and tells us, that the Protection of God, (as was say'd,) must not be expected when we attempt to do what nothing but a miraculous Power can keep us from perishing in the doing, when we are no ways oblig'd to do it, nor have any warrant to hope for such extraordinary Protection if we do.

This is to presume much too far upon our dearness to God; as if in our rashest ventures, where the hazard is extreamly great, and no necessity, no

motive to engage us in it but Pride, Vol. II. and a vain glorious Humor, he would not let us miscarry.

This is with unsufferable Insolence, to impose upon God what Tasks we please, as if we had Omnipotence at our Command, to attend for our Preservation, in all our mad freaks and extravagancies. And 'tis but Just, that those who are thus daringly provoking, should perish in their Wickedness and Folly, and be a warning to others that they may see and fear, and do no more presumptuously. And this, as was said, was what the Devil design'd should be the fate of our Lord.

But besides this Sense of those Words, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*; they being spoken by God Incarnate to the chief of the apostate Spirits when he made this attempt upon him, carry with them the force of such a check, as could not but mightily *appal* that infernal Rebel, and make him be- think himself whom he had to do with; and being, no doubt, deliver'd with a peculiar Emphasis and Majesty, might have such signatures of Divinity, as to begin to demonstrate his being the e-
ternal

Vol. II. ternal Son of God, and consequently could not but fill him with inexpressible Dread and Confusion. And it may be, they might be design'd by our Lord to make way for Satan's coming to the certain Knowledge of his being *God* as well as *Man*; which hitherto, probably, he was ignorant of, or at least in doubt and suspense whether 'twas so, or no.

Now, from this *second* Temptation, we may see, how great the *Power* is, as well as *Cunning* of Evil Spirits; and what dreadful work they would make with us, if not restrain'd by God.

But thanks be to our great and good Preserver, he is Chain'd and Fetter'd, and has his Bounds set him, which he cannot pass, without the Divine Permission, and can't go one Step farther than that Permission will allow.

Thus, tho' he had leave to carry our Lord so far in the Air, and set him in so dangerous a Place, as we have shewn that Pinnacle of the Temple was; yet he had no Power to throw him down from thence, which a very little force would have done, had he been permitted to use it, and where 'twas hard for him to keep his standing,
ing,

ing, tho' no force were us'd to fling Vol. II.
him off. All he could do, was to
tempt him to leap down of himself,
and perswade him there was no dan-
ger if he did; but he could go no far-
ther, and when that would not do,
he was oblig'd to take him off as safely
as he had set him on.

So that 'tis plain, (and blessed be
God that it is so!) the Devil can on-
ly *tempt*, not *force* us to commit any
Sin against God, or do any mischief to
our selves; neither can he hurt us,
whatever his Malice may be, unless we
consent to it first.

The Tempter being thus baffled a
second time, and in so awful a manner,
that none but the *Prince of darkness* would
have dar'd to proceed any further;
was yet resolved *once* more to see what
might be done, his *All* being then at
Stake, and concludes to try him with
that which prevail'd upon himself to
revolt from his Allegiance to God, and
that was *Ambition*, an unmeasurable
desire of Rule and Dominion, as that
which would advance him to the near-
est resemblance of the *most High*. And
accordingly, as quick as Thought, he
removes Jesus from the Pinnacle of the
Tem-

Vol. II. Temple, to an *exceeding high Mountain*,
(where, 'tis needless Curiosity to en-
quire, tho' probably not far from Je-
rusalem, which was encompass'd with
them) and shew'd him in an instant,

Mat. 4. 8, 9 *All the Kingdoms of the World, and the*
Luk. 4. 6, 7 *Power and Glory of them, and say'd un-*
to him, all these things will I give thee,
for that is deliver'd unto me, and to whom-
soever I will I give it, if thou therefore wilt
fall down and worship me, all shall be thine.

The way of the Devils doing this,
was either by Magical Illusion, mak-
ing that appear as real, which was not,
by an airy, phantastick Representati-
on; or else from that wide Prospect
that that Mountain would afford him
of the Holy City, and the chief
Towns about it, he might take occasion
to discourse to him of the vastly great-
er Power and Glory of the whole
World, and give a charming Descrip-
tion of it, and then tell him, that *all*
was at his disposal, and that *he* should
be the great and happy Man that
should possess and enjoy it all, upon
the easy Condition of only doing Ho-
mage to *him*, as the chief Lord of the
Fee.

How

How far the Devil say'd true, when Vol. II. he told our Lord that the Power and Glory of the World was deliver'd unto *him*, and to whomsoever he would, he could give it; I shall not stand to enquire. He is call'd, indeed, in Scripture, the *Prince*, nay, the *God* of this World; but I suppose, that only signifies what he is *made* by wicked, worldly Men, not any Power, much less *Right*, that he really has to dispose of the Possession and Dominion of it, which none can do but *he*, who is the *Blessed, and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* John 14. 30. 2 Cor. 4. 4. 1 Tim. 6. 15.

This therefore, was only a false boast of the Father of Lies; and we may well wonder at his strange confidence, in saying so to our Lord. But now he found he was sufficiently detected, and therefore appear'd like himself; and to make one home push for all, stuck at nothing that might carry his Point. But here, however patiently Jesus bore the Indignities that before were offered to *himself*, he was moved to indignation when his Divine Father's Honour and Prerogative was invaded, and thought it high time to put an end to the Devil's blasphemous Insolence;

E

and

Vol. II. and said unto him with a majestick Turn, that became the Eternal Son of God, *Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* He is the great Creator and Governour of the World, 'tis he that taketh down one, and setteth up another; by *him* Kings Reign, and *his* sacred Scepter ruleth over all; and therefore, he that desires to rule the World, must make his *court* to God, not *thee*; and the sincere Worship and Service of that supreme Being, is the surest way to arrive at Empire.

With this, Satan was so *Thunder-struck*, that he could keep the Field no longer; being now, too well satisfy'd, that Jesus was the Eternal Son of God *Incarnate*. . And accordingly, he afterwards, and that very quickly, acknowledged him so to be. As particularly, when an *unclean Devil* that had possess'd a Man, cry'd out publicly in the Synagogue *with a loud Voice*, as if in extraordinary Torture at his presence, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee Jesus of Nazareth, art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.* And a little after,

Lu. 4. 34.

after, in the same Chapter 'tis said, Vol. II. *Devils came out of many, crying out, and saying, thou art Christ, the Son of God, for they knew that he was Christ. And in the 8th Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, the miserable Dæmoniack that was possess'd with a Legion of Evil Spirits, was forc'd by one of them to say, Crying out, and falling down before him, What have I to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee torment me not.* Lu. 4. 41.

Thus was the old Infernal Serpent, that great Dragon which deceiv'd our first Parents, and tempted them so successfully, that they lost their Innocence, and Paradice, and incurr'd the sad Sentence of Misery and Death for their disobedience to their Maker; and which was infinitely worse than Death, forfeited the favour of God, and the hopes of Heaven, without a Mercy greater than the Tongues of Men and Angels can express: Thus was he that so fatally deceived the first of humane Race, and bore such sway over their wretched Posterity for many Ages after, gloriously vanquish'd by the Seed of that very Woman, who first hearkned to his treacherous Suggestions.

Vol. II. Then began to be fulfill'd that early
 Gen. 3. 15. Prophecy, *I will put enmity, (speaking
 to the Serpent) between thee and the
 Woman, and between thy Seed and her
 Seed; it shall bruise thy Head, and thou
 shalt bruise his Heel: and it was carry'd
 on, throughout the afflicted, but yet
 conquering Life of the Holy Jesus,
 and compleated upon his Cross, when
 by Death he destroy'd him that had the
 Power of Death, that is the Devil, and
 Heb. 2. 14. Colof. 2. 15. having spoiled Principalities and Powers
 by these very Sufferings which Satan's
 Malice brought upon him, he Triumph'd
 over them. And tho' the Serpent was
 permitted to fulfil the Prophecy in
 thus bruising our Saviour's *Heel*; yet
 'twas to his own Destruction, and
 gave an incurable Wound to his own
Head. He had the satisfaction indeed
 to see the Son of God by his instiga-
 tion, made a *Man of Sorrows*, and ac-
 quainted with Grief, and in his humane
 Nature cruelly handled by his wicked
 Instruments, and at length tortur'd
 to Death upon an ignominious Cross:
 But that very Cross prov'd his Tri-
 umphal Chariot on which he crush'd
 the poysonous Head of that Infernal
Dragon into the Dust, and traml'd him
 under his victorious Feet. Now*

Now from this *last* Temptation of Vol. II. the Devils, and the noble Repulse our divine Champion gave him, and his leaving him upon it, as entirely vanquish'd and overcome, we may observe the *order* of Satan's Temptations, and which he continues still, and what especial Trust he repos'd in the strength of the last of them, when he offer'd the Power and Glory of the whole World to our Lord; which he thought could hardly be rejected.

As to the *order* of his Temptations, when he assaulted Jesus in the Wilderness, and which he observes still in his attempts upon *us*; he *first*, in a secret covert manner, as I said before, throws ill Thoughts and Suggestions into our Minds, which may be as the Seed of suitable ill Actions hereafter. The Heart is the Treasury both of good and evil. *A good Man, out of the good* ^{Matt. 12. 35.} *Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth good Things, and an evil Man out of the evil Treasure of his Heart bringeth forth evil Things; and from within, out of the Hearts of Men, proceed not only evil* ^{Mar. 7. 31.} *Thoughts, but they soon grow, and shoot up into vile Practices, Adulteries, Murthers, Thefts, &c. and so Lust,* ^{Jam. 1. 15.}

Vol. II. *when it hath conceiv'd, bringeth forth Sin, as Sin when it is finish'd bringeth forth Death.*

When he hath thus prepar'd his way in this undiscover'd manner, then he helps us to opportunities of committing those Sins to which Nature leads us most; and takes advantage of our present circumstances, observes which way our inclinations are chiefly bent, to *Riches*, or to *Honour*, or *bodily Pleasure*, and plies us with Temptations accordingly. And generally he begins as he did with our Saviour, with what will please and gratify our bodily Appetites, and tempts us first of all to *Luxury*, *Intemperance*, and *ungovern'd Lust*, to which Youth is most prone, and most fond of, and furnishes us with such Company as will intice us to it, and suitable convenience to act it.

When the Season for this begins to be over, and we are cloy'd and surfeited with this fulsome way of Life, or by the grace of God have successfully resisted his temptations to it; then he endeavours to infect us with *Spiritual Pride*, and *Presumption*, and to inject high Thoughts of our selves into our
Minds

Minds, with respect to our Virtue, Vol. II. and Religious Attainments, and of the great share we have in the favour of God, so great, that scarce any thing will forfeit; which he thinks will make us careless and negligent, and apt to run into unnecessary Dangers, and enter upon rash, unjustifiable Undertakings, in too much confidence of the Divine Support and Protection, till we fall, and that sometimes irrecoverably both in Notion and in Practice into the Snares that he has laid for us, and by this means decoy'd us into. And some who have with great Bravery resisted and conquer'd the Temptations of the *Flesh*, have been vanquish'd by Satan's Perswasives to more spiritual Wickedness, which have indeed much more of the *Devil* in them, and secure his Possession of us more firmly than any thing besides.

But if Men's Heads don't lie *this* way, then he makes use of that alluring Bait, the *World*, the Power, and Wealth, and Glory of it, as his last *reserve*, and which takes every Body of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions, and seldom fails of success. Mens desires of things of this nature are as sharp as

Vol. II. the keenest *Hunger*, and insatiable as the most ravenous *Canine Appetite*, which nothing can resist, or satisfy.

If Men are *Poor*, that they think will *justify* their greediness, that they may not Perish for want of necessities, and make their circumstances easy for the future; and to these, the Devil gives opportunities of unjust gain, first in little petty instances, and then still further and further, and tempts them to lay hold of them, to which they are too easily perswaded.

To those that have *Plenty* already, he shews the splendor of *abundance*, and the *Honour* that goes along with it, and tells them what way to attain it; which is only to do some few things which nothing but *Religion* forbids, and a Law or two it may be that is founded upon it: And who would let slip so fair an opportunity? And when once Men are thoroughly engag'd this way, and find the sweetness of it, that enlarges their desires of still *more*; and then, nothing shall be stuck at, that shall gratify their boundless Ambition, and lead to the top of Honour, and Glory, and Empire.

Thus

Thus are we too ready to fall down Vol. II. and worship the Devil, to make him our God, and comply with his Temptations, and enslave our selves to his cursed Will, for the sake of this perishing World; some in one degree, some in another, but truly *most* of us, more or less.

This then, being the order and method of his Temptations, these the chief Batteries from whence he assaults us; Let us be constantly upon our guard and defence. And in the first place, keep our Hearts with all diligence, from his unseen secret Injections, because from thence proceed the issues of Life and Death respectively.

After this, let us be careful to flee all youthful Lusts, to mortify inordinate Affection, to be sober and temperate in all Things, and to possess our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour.

Then, let us always be cloath'd with Humility, and never without the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit; and the higher our Station, and the greater our spiritual Attainments are, the more watchful should we be, lest Pride and Arrogance, and Presumption, throw us headlong down.

Let

Vol. II. Let us more and more endeavour to be *dead to the World*, mortify'd to its Greatness, Honour, and Power; and learn in every State therewith to be content, putting our trust only in the Providence of God; in frequent contemplation of our infinitely more glorious Inheritance in his Heavenly Kingdom. And if to this we add, as we should never fail to do, our fervent Prayers for the Divine Grace and Assistance, and a daily serious Conversation with the Scriptures; we need not doubt, but we shall be too many for the Tempter at last, and as our great Master did, come off with Victory.

But then, we must withal remember, that this Life is a State of continual *Warfare*, and when by a vigorous resistance we force him to depart from
 Lu. 4. 13. us, 'twill be only for a Season, as we are told he left our Lord.

'Twill become us therefore, not to be too *secure*, but vigilant and circumspect, and ready to make a fresh Defence, knowing what a restless, and subtle Adversary we have to deal with, that goes continually about *seeking whom he may devour*.

Now,

Now, when the Devil had ended *all* Vol. II.
his Temptation, and Jesus with infinite Matt. 4.
 Bravery and Honour had given him 11.
 an intire defeat; St. *Matthew* tells us
that behold, Angels came and ministred
unto him, to grace his Triumph, and
 supply what was needful to refresh
 him, after his long Fast and toilsome
 Conflict with the Prince of Dark-
 ness.

In what manner they did it, I shall
 not pretend to say; but doubtless 'twas
 done effectually: And then, with new
 Vigour, and holy Satisfaction, and Joy,
He returned in the power of the Spirit in Lu. 4. 14.
to Galilee, and enter'd upon his Mi- — 15.
 nistry, being thus prepar'd and ena-
 bled for it, *and was glorify'd of all.*

And without all question, the Com-
 fort and Satisfaction is inexpressible that
 a good Man feels, when he has baffled
 a Temptation, and preserv'd his In-
 tegrity, and his Conscience untouch'd
 with Guilt. This inspirits him with
 new Courage and Resolution, in the
 Service of the God of his Salvation;
 engages him with exceeding Alacrity
 and Chearfulness in the performance
 of the Duties of his Station, and when
 there

Vol. II. there is occasion furnishes him with fresh Strength to win new Victories.

Wherefore finally, my Brethren, let us be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, and put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood alone, but against Principalities and Powers, against Spiritual Wickedness in high Places. Take unto you therefore the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Ephes. 6. And then, The God of Peace will, in due
10. time, bruise Satan under your Feet; and
Rom. 16. we shall be more than Conquerors through
20. him that loved us, and hath Conquer'd
Rom. 8. for us, and was himself made perfect
37. through Sufferings; even Jesus, the great
Heb. 2.10 Captain of our Salvation.

And Thou, most gracious Lord, who
Collec^t 1st. for our Sakes did Fast forty Days and forty
Sund. in Nights, give us Grace to use such Absti-
Lent. nence, that our Flesh being subdu'd to the
Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly Motions
in Righteousness and true Holiness, to thy
Honour and Glory, who livest and reignest
with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one
God, World without end. Amen!

And

And since thou seest that we have no **Vol. II.**
 Power of our selves to help our selves, keep **Collect 2d.**
 us both outwardly in our Bodies and in- **Sund. Lent**
 wardly in our Souls; that we may be de-
 fended against all Adversities which may hap-
 pen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts
 which may assault and hurt the Soul. **3d. Sund.**
 Stretch forth, Almighty God, the Right
 Hand of thy Majesty to be our Defence **4th. after**
 against all our Enemies, that thou being **Trinity.**
 our Protector, our Ruler, and Guide, we
 may so pass through Things temporal that
 we finally lose not the Things eternal.
 Grant this, O Heavenly Father, through
 Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer.
 Amen! Amen!

Practi-

Vol. II.

Practical OBSERVATIONS
UPON OUR
Saviour's Miracles, &c.

II.

The Buyers and Sellers driven out of the Temple.

JOHN ii. 13, 14, &c.

*And the Jews Passover was at hand, and
Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
And found in the Temple those that sold
Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves, and the
changers of Mony, sitting;
And when he had made a Scourge of small
Cords, he drove them all out of the
Temple, &c.*

AFTER our Lord had triumph'd
over Satan in the Wilderness,
and was return'd into Galilee, and had
call'd some Disciples to attend him,
and

and at a Wedding in *Cana*, began to Vol. II.
manifest his Divine Power, by turn-
ing *Water into Wine*; the Feast of the
Passover drawing nigh, he went up to ^{ver. 3.}
Jerusalem, which at that time was al-
ways throng'd with People from all
Parts, with a design then to enter up-
on his publick Ministry, and which was
the properest Season he could make
choice of for it.

And when he was there, the first
Thing he did was to go into the *Tem-
ple* to worship his heavenly Father,
and recommend himself to his Blessing
and Protection, in the great Work he
was going about. But at his coming
into the first Court of it, call'd the
Court of the Gentiles, because there the
Gentile Profelytes that had renounc'd
their Idolatry, and worship'd the God
of *Israel*, but were not yet admitted
into the Jewish Church by Circumci-
sion, were permitted to come and
worship, and bring their Offerings:
When he came there, with what In-
dignation and Abhorrence did he see
the Place fill'd with Oxen, Sheep and
Doves, and Men very busy in counting
and receiving Mony as if it were a
Market, or an Exchange, rather than
a

Vol. II. a part of the Temple of the most High God!

The occasion of their bringing those Creatures there, was to accommodate those that came from far with their proper Sacrifices which could not be brought with them without much Trouble and Expence; and the *Mony-changers* were those that return'd the Mony which People that liv'd at a great distance had occasion for during their stay at *Jerusalem*, or chang'd greater Pieces for less, with an allowance of some Advantage to themselves.

'Tis true this was a great *Convenience*, and those that had the Charge of the Temple conniv'd at it, and were no doubt consider'd for so doing; but any part of the Temple, even the outmost Court of it, was too sacred a Place for such Purposes, and it fir'd our Saviours *Zeal* to see his Father's House so prophan'd; and he could not bear to see it so, but immediately made a *Scourge of small Cords* (which probably he found scatter'd upon the Floor, as having been us'd in Binding the Sacrifices, and then thrown away as of no further value) and with a warm Re-
sentment

ment of the Indignity offer'd to God, Vol. II.
*Drove them all out of the Temple, and the
 Sheep and the Oxen, and poured out the
 Changers Money, and overthrew the Tables,
 upon which they counted it, and said
 unto them that sold Doves, take these
 Things hence (which had he let loose
 would have flown away and been lost,
 so duly temper'd was his Zeal with
 Goodness and Discretion) and then
 gave them this awful Reproof, Make
 not my Fathers House a House of Mer-* V. 15, 16.
chandize.

This extraordinary Action of Jesus brought into his Disciples Mind that Passage in Psalm 69. v. 9. *The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up*, hath made me uneasy and in Pain, like a continual gnawing upon my Heart, 'till I have vindicated the Honour of thy Sanctuary; and, as it follows in the same Verse, *The Reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* I am more moved with the Dishonour reflected upon God by such Practices, than for the greatest Affronts that can be put upon my self.

This indeed is the Spirit of true Religion, and Things that bear a near Relation to God, should be treated with

F great

Vol. II. great Veneration, and strike us with a sacred Awe; particularly the Places of God's more especial Presence, and that are hallow'd and set apart for his peculiar Worship and Service. And accordingly God commanded his People to

Lev. 19. *reverence his Sanctuary*; and they did
30. so, 'till this ill Custom crept in upon them, under the pretence of Convenience, and by the avaricious Connivance of those who preferr'd a little filthy Lucre, before the Honour of their great Master's House.

But see the difference between mercenary *Servants*, and a *Son*, whose Heart was fill'd with Love and Duty to his heavenly Father; he made it his first Business when he entred upon the publick Exercise of his sacred Office, to correct so great an Abuse of that holy Place, and restore it to the Dignity that belong'd to the Courts of the eternal King of Heaven and Earth. And when three Years after, just before his Sufferings and Death, he found a return of that prophane usage of that holy Place (as ill Customs, especially where Interest is concern'd, are not easily destroy'd, and will be too apt to spring up again unless kept down by a repeated

repeated, constant Care) he treats the Vol. II.
 Offenders as before, and would not
 suffer them so much as to make a *Tho-*
rough-fare of it, and rebuk'd them with
 greater sharpness, and said, *It is writ-*
ten, my House shall be called the House of *Isa. 56. 7.*
Prayer to all Nations, but ye have made it *Mat. 21.*
a Den of Thieves. And so, which is *13.*
 remarkable, both the *First* and the *Mar. 11.*
Last publick Act of his Ministry, was *16, 17.*
 his vindicating the Place of God's Wor-
 ship from the Prophanation of those
 irreligious People, and asserting the
 Reverence that was due to it from all
 the World; which should teach us to
keep our Foot when we go into the House of
God, and behave our selves in it with
 the greatest reverential Awe, and by
 no means, for our own private Ease or
 Convenience, do any thing that is un-
 becoming the Dignity of that sacred
 Place, or suffer any thing of that na-
 ture to be done by others, if we are
 able to prevent it. This is but to fol-
 low the Example of our blessed Lord,
 to imitate his holy Zeal for the Honour
 of our God, and the Places where he is
 graciously pleas'd to receive our most
 solemn Prayers and Praises, and give
 us his especial Blessing; the awfulness

Vol. II. of which Places, and the serious devout Behaviour of such as come there to Worship, very much conducing to the increase of the inward Awe and Veneration of that tremendous Being in our Minds, in whose especial presence we then are, and prostrate our selves before him.

What an *unchristian* Zeal then is that which shews it self in vilifying, prophaning, and even demolishing those sacred Places? Does it not carry with it evident Marks of its being *set on Fire of Hell*, when it reflects so much Dishonour upon the God of Heaven, and is so contrary to the Spirit and the Practice of the Holy Jesus, and to the Interest of true Religion? To which the venerable, majestick gravity of publick Worship, in Temples hallow'd and set apart for the Service of the Almighty, is no small Advantage.

Now this zealous Concern of our Saviour for the Honour of God's House, express'd in so unusual a manner; and the prophane carriage in it, reprov'd and corrected with such an Air of Authority, and in so high a Style, as, *Make not my Father's house a house of Merchandize, a den of Thieves*; and all
this

this from a Man of private and low Vol. II.
 condition, and mean appearance, not
 at all back'd by those that had the
 Power in their Hands, but rather done
 in opposition to their base connivance;
 and yet so readily and quietly submit-
 ted to, more than once; that we read
 of no Disturbance about it, nor repe-
 tition of the Fault 'till three Years af-
 ter, and then but very little said to him
 for taking so much upon him, by the
 Jewish Rulers: This seem'd so exceed-
 ingly strange to St. Jerome, that he
 says, *Of all the extraordinary Things which* Hieron. in
our Lord did, he thought this to be the Mat. 21.
most wonderful; and concludes, That ^{12.}
Ignem quiddam, & sydereum Radiabat
ex Oculis ejus, & divinitatis Majestas
lucebat in facie: A fiery Brightness, like
the Rays of a Star beam'd from his Eyes,
and a divine Majesty shone around his Face,
 which aw'd them into a ready com-
 pliance. And no doubt but they felt
 some very unusual Impressions, when
 so many, to their great Trouble and
 Loss, so quietly withdrew at the shak-
 ing of the Whip of a mean Person, of
 no Figure or Authority, and took so
 patiently as they did the throwing
 down their Counting-Tables, and
 F 3 pouring

Vol. II. pouring out their Mony on the Ground.

It may well remind us of that Passage in the Prophet Malachi, Chap. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth, for he is like a Refiners fire, and like Fullers Soap? And he shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, and he shall purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer to the Lord an Offering in Righteousness. Then shall the Offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*

Now from this extraordinary Occurrence, this Zeal which our Lord twice express'd, in so publick and remarkable a manner, for the Honour of his Father's House, the Place peculiarly dedicated to his Service, I shall take occasion to shew, That there ought to be some Structures consecrated and set apart for the Exercise of publick Divine Worship; and that, those that are so, are blessed,

blessed with God's more especial Presence; Vol. II.
and consequently, that we should behave
our selves in them with all possible Awe and
Reverence, and a religious Fear and
Dread; and likewise keep and adorn them
in such a decent manner, as befits what
hath so peculiar a Relation to God.

As for the setting apart, and Consecrating or Appropriating some particular Places and Structures for the more solemn and publick Worship of God, it seems to be a Dictate of Nature; for it was ever done, by all People, from the earliest Ages of the World 'till now.

In the Patriarchal State, the first Instance that will come fully up to the Case in hand, is that of good Jacob, *Gen. 28.* who, after the extraordinary Dream he had of a Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven, and Angels going up and down upon it, and the Lord standing above it, and giving him a Promise of the Land whereon he lay to himself and his Posterity, whom he would bless above all others, and make them his peculiar People, and that in his Seed all the Families of the Earth should be blessed; and assur'd him of his Protection where-ever he should go, 'till he had made good his Promise

Vol. II. to him: When he awaked out of his
 Gen. 28. Sleep, he said, *Surely the Lord is in this*
 16, 17. *place and I knew it not: And he was*
afraid, and said, How dreadful is this
Place? This is no other but the House of
God, and this is the Gate of Heaven. And
then, he rose up early in the morning, and
took the Stone which he had put for his
Pillow, and set it up for a Pillar, and
pour'd Oil upon the top of it, as the Dedi-
cation of that Place for the future to
God's peculiar Service, and call'd the
Name of that Place Beth-el, which sig-
 20, &c. *nifies, the House of God. And then he*
began to worship there, and Vowed a
Vow, saying, If God will be with me, and
keep me in this way that I go, and will
give me Bread to eat, and Rayment to put
on, so that I come again to my Father's
House in peace: Then shall the Lord be my
God; and this Stone which I have set up
for a Pillar, shall be God's house. And
moreover, as the Endowment of this
House of God, and a Maintenance for
those that should Minister in it, he
makes this further Vow, And of All that
Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the
Tenth to Thee.

This is the first solemn Dedication
 of a Temple to God's Service and Con-
 secration

secration, or setting it apart for his Vol. II.
Use, that we meet with in Scripture;
and we see too, how early (long before the time of *Moses*) and that by one of the first Patriarchs, who was a peculiar Favourite of God, 'twas thought requisite to make a Provision for those that should perform the Service of such holy Places, and that the Tenth of Men's Possessions should be the settled proportion of it. And we may well believe, that God who gave *Jacob* that heavenly Dream, did likewise put into his Heart that Resolution of his to build a House there for his Worship, and endow it with the *Tithe*. Which seems to me so strong an Argument for the Divine Original (some hundreds of years before the positive Law of *Moses* in that Case) of appropriating certain Structures to Religious Uses, and maintaining those that shall officiate there in Divine Service, with the tenth part of what God shall bless Men withal, as will not easily be answered.

And 'tis further observable, that some years after, God, in another Dream that *Jacob* had (which was the way wherein he us'd frequently to reveal

- Vol. II. veal himself of old) is pleas'd to call himself *the God of Bethel*, and to take notice of the *Vow* that *Jacob* had made there to him, and the *Pillar* he set up and Anointed ; as approving the Dedication of that Place to him, and owning it for his Habitation. And in *Gen. 35. 1.* we find God again reminding him of *Bethel*, and commanding him to go and dwell there, and make an Altar unto God that appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of *Esau* his
7. Brother. And accordingly, *Jacob* with all his Household came to *Bethel*, and built there an Altar, and call'd the Place *El-Beth-el*, that is, the God of *Bethel*, or God's House, and pour'd a
14. Drink-offering, and Oil thereon, and God again appear'd to him, and talk'd with him, and bless'd him.

Now 'tis worth our notice, that the Stone which is mention'd Chap. 28. he is said to set up as a *Pillar of Remembrance* only, and vow'd upon his safe return from *Haran*, whither he was then going, to make it a *House* for God ; but here we are told, that he built an Altar, and offered upon it unto him. Which does plainly evince, That as that Place was set apart for God's peculiar

culiar Worship, so there was some Vol. II.
 kind of Structure rais'd for that purpose; which tho' not like the Temples and Churches that have been Built since, yet may as properly be call'd *God's House* as these are; or, which is all one, *the Place of his more especial presence*, where he would receive the Worship of his Servants, and be call'd upon by them, and in return converse with them by such ways of revealing himself as he was pleas'd to favour the Patriarchs with at that time, and give them his Blessing.

And accordingly, we find, this *Bethel*, was not only for that time and present occasion a Place of God's Worship, but continu'd to be so for a long while after the first Dedication of it; even when the Children of *Israel* were settled in the Land of *Canaan*.

Thus we read that *Samuel* went up from year to year in Circuit, to *Bethel*, ^{1 Sam. 15, 21.} and *Gilgal*, and *Mizpeh*, Places of God's peculiar Presence and Worship, and judg'd *Israel* in all those Places, and likewise perform'd there the proper Offices of a Priest. And in the 10th ^{7. 5, 6, 9.} Chapter of the First of *Samuel*, we are told of three Men that were going up to

Vol. II. to God to *Bethel*, one carrying *Three Kids*, another *Three Loaves*, and another a *Bottle of Wine*; which were, no doubt, design'd for their *Offerings* there. And even after the Temple of *Solomon* was built, this *Bethel* was esteem'd a Place of so great Sanctity, that *Jero-boam*, when he endeavour'd to withdraw the People from their Worship at *Jerusalem*, thereby to strengthen his own Interest, and secure them from returning to the King of *Judah*, set up a *Calf in Bethel* to be worship'd.

1 Kings
12, 28.

Thus, so long ago as the Times of the first Patriarchs, we see Places were hallow'd and set apart for God's peculiar Service, and that by his own Direction, as we have prov'd; so that 'twas not a meer *Jewish* thing, as some weakly object, and in use only under *Moses* and the Kings of *Israel*, and therefore to be laid aside in the more spiritual Times of Christianity. And so far is it from being meerly of positive Institution, only in one particular Nation, that the Reason of all Mankind every where, how corrupt and even ridiculous soever their way of Worship was, hath put them upon erecting Temples to the Honour, and for

for the peculiar Service of their Gods: Vol. II.
As is too evident from all History to need any particular proof.

In the very first beginnings of Christianity, when that *new Sect*, as 'twas call'd, was so much discourag'd, oppos'd and persecuted; tho' they could not, for that Reason, build Churches for their publick Worship, yet as long as they cou'd they frequent-ed the Temple of the *Jews*, and made use of some particular Apartment belonging to it for their Religious Assemblies, which is call'd, *Acts* 1. 13. an *upper Room*. For there were many large Chambers adjoining to the Temple, and which were reckon'd as Parts of it; some whereof were design'd for several Uses of the Priests, when they were preparing for their Ministration, by Washing, and putting on their Habits, and the like, and wherein they kept the Instruments they us'd in their Sacrifices, and other holy Things: And some of them stood open as private Oratories and Places of Retirement, upon account of Devotion and Religious Conference; in one of which, 'tis suppos'd, the Apostles and first Christians met together to *break Bread*, *Acts* 20. 7, 8.
or,

Vol. II. or, in our way of speaking, to receive the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which then, they did not dare to do more publickly.

Afterwards, when Times were more favourable, Churches were built in many Places, and set apart for the Christian Worship; and when the *Roman* Emperors embrac'd the Faith, then very stately Structures were in great Numbers erected by *Them*, and other pious People, and beautify'd and adorn'd with their best Art and great Expence: That the House might be in some measure suitable to the Divine Majesty, who was pleas'd, as they believ'd, to be in a more especial manner present there, to receive the Homage and Addresses of his People.

And this has been the Opinion and the practice of the Church in all Ages ever since; only now, in the dregs of Time, when the measure of Iniquity begins to be full, we meet with some Vilifiers and Despisers of Churches: But they are such as vilify and despise the *Sacraments* too, and oppose the most fundamental Articles of Religion. No wonder therefore that those Men speak contemptuously of the House, who

who have such degrading Thoughts of Vol. II,
that blessed Jesus who is worship'd
there; and whose Principles tend di-
rectly to the Ruin of his holy Religion.

But yet, these very People, have
Places set apart for their own Religious
Meetings, and which of late are built
with no small Cost, and kept with a
great deal of Care, and many of them
likewise put to no other Use; so that,
in effect, they are Churches too, only
built in another Form.

For indeed, they are sensible, as all
the World must be, that there can be
no stated, regular, publick Worship,
without some fix'd determinate Place
wherein to worship, to which the Peo-
ple at certain times may resort; and
which, for the sake of Decency, if no-
thing else, should be set apart for that
purpose only.

But the Truth is, they are set on to
destroy the present Ecclesiastical Estab-
lishment (by whom, and for what
Reasons, we may easily imagine)
and therefore 'tis that our Churches
and our Ministers must have no Quar-
ter, but *Down with them, down with them,*
even to the Ground.

The

Vol. II. The next Thing to be observ'd, is, That those Places which are duly set apart for God's peculiar Service, are bless'd with his more *especial Presence*; and this likewise was the Belief of all Nations, and to remind the People of it, in the Heathen Temples there were placed the Images of their Gods, which were to be as their visible Representatives: And accordingly, to them they sacrific'd, falling down before them, adoring and offering up their Prayers to them, as believing that there was a Divinity lodg'd in them.

And under the *Mosaic Dispensation*, even in the Wilderness, when they had only a moveable Temple, which was call'd the *Tabernacle*, or a magnificent kind of *Tent*, and so fram'd, that it might be readily taken in pieces, and carry'd about with them in the several Marches of their then travelling Condition, and soon put together and set up, where they rested and made any stay; and which was made by God's own direction, even as to the particular Fashion of it, the very Materials and Furniture, that he might have a

Exod. 25. Sanctuary wherein to dwell among
8, 9. them: After he had appointed who
should

should perform the Service there, and Vol. II.
 how they should be *habited*, in a man-
 ner different from all the rest of the
 People, and very richly too, and par-
 ticularly instructed them how he wou'd
 be worship'd, with what Sacrifices
 and Ceremonies; he then promises ^{Exod. 28,}
 them his divine Presence there, ^{29.} And
there will I meet with the Children of Israel,
says he, and the Tabernacle shall be san-
tified with my Glory. 43.

And accordingly, when all was fi-
 nish'd, we read, *Exod. 40. 34.* That a
 Cloud cover'd the Tent of the Congrega-
 tion, and the Glory of the Lord fill'd the
 Tabernacle. And v. 38, *The Cloud of*
the Lord was upon the Tabernacle by Day,
and Fire was on it by Night in the sight of
all the house of Israel, throughout all their
Journies. That is, there was conti-
 nually a visible appearance, tho' not of
 any Image of God, as among the Hea-
 thens, which was expressly forbidden;
 yet, of what should sensibly assure the
 People that God was there more espe-
 cially present among them.

And when they were settled in the
 promis'd Land, and the Tabernacle
 was by God's appointment improv'd ^{1 Kin.}
 into a most glorious Temple; at the ^{5. 5.}

G

time

Vol. II. time of the Dedication of it, or sanctifying or setting it apart for that most holy use, we read, That *the Cloud* likewise, *so fill'd that house of the Lord, that the Priests could not stand to minister because of it, for the glory of the Lord had fill'd the House of the Lord,* 1 Kings 8.

10, 11. And we several times meet with this Form of Invocation, O Lord God of Israel that dwellest between the Cherubims; that is, those plac'd at each end of the Mercy-seat, which was kept in the Holy of Holies (or an inner part answering to the Chancels of our Churches) and from whence God said he would Commune with them. And God often is said to *Dwell in Zion*, and that the Temple is his *House*, and the Place of his Habitation; that is the Place of his especial Presence to hear their Prayers, and to bless them.

2 Kings

19. 15.

Psal. 80. 1.

Exod. 25.

22.

And thus Things continu'd 'till the Temple was destroy'd, and the Jewish Religion was perfected by the Christian. And tho' now there is no *visible* Presence of God in our Churches, and we dare not, as the Papists do, set up Images and Pictures to resemble him and bring him to our Mind, because *God is a Spirit*, and to what shall we liken him?

him? And lest the unthinking Vulgar Vol. II. should be led by it into gross Idolatry, as I doubt they are too often in the Church of Rome, and which indeed betrays them into it, by directing them to Kneel and Pray before those Images; yet we may be sure of this, God will not be less present in a Christian than a Jewish Temple.

And his eternal Son, Jesus, our Redeemer, whose bodily Presence as united to humane Nature made the Glory of the latter Temple, which stood in the Days of his Flesh, greater than that of Solomon, tho' exceedingly short of it in the Building and Adornment, hath promised in a peculiar manner to be present in our Religious Assemblies, in those holy Places more especially which are Consecrated and Appropriated to his Service only.

Hag. 2. 9.
Mal. 3. 1.
Ezra 3. 12.
Hag. 2. 3.
Mat. 18.
20.

And of this too, I think all Christians seem to be very well satisfy'd, ev'n the Sectaries themselves in some measure, who pretend to wait upon God for his Inspirations in the several Places of their meeting, as believing him to be in an especial manner present there; only, according to their usual narrowness of Spirit (and it may be

Vol. II. something worse) they confine that Presence of his to themselves, those of their own Party and Persuasion, as his only Church and People.

'Tis true, we don't think, neither do they I suppose, nor any one else in his Senses, that 'tis the Place of Assembling, in what manner soever it may be Consecrated and Dedicated to God's Worship and Service, that draws him down to it as by a kind of *Charm*; but the Congregation of pious and devout People there met together to Praise and Adore him, and present their Petitions to him, and with Awe and Reverence to be instructed in his Will; this 'tis that inclines God, according to his gracious Promise, to vouchsafe his peculiar Presence there.

But yet, Places solemnly devoted to Divine Uses, and which in all Ages have had such Honour paid to them, because of the relation they stand in to God: Places of this nature, may in all Reason stand as fair at least for being favour'd with God's especial Presence as their *Meeting-Houses*; and which they would willingly change for our Churches if they could, and then would talk as highly for them. For if the

the Truth were known, the main Vol. II. Reason, after all their frivolous pretences of their quarrelling with them, and using them with so much Contempt, is because they are not *Theirs*. And I pray God they never may be, 'till they heartily join with us in Divine Worship in them; and then we shall rejoyce in *their* Propriety in them, and bless God that we are at length become one Sheepfold, under one Shepherd, of one Heart, and one Mind, and one Denomination, and love as Brethren.

But, *when* this will be, God only knows; — Wherefore let us go on to the next Thing to be consider'd, which is as a Consequence to what hath been hitherto said, and that is, That we ought to behave our selves in these Places of God's more especial Presence, and which are Consecrated and set apart for his peculiar Service, with the utmost Awe and Reverence, and a Religious Fear and Dread; as being, in the Words of *Jacob*, *Gen. 28. 17. No other but the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven*: And likewise take care to keep, and adorn them in such a manner, as befits what has so near a relation to God.

Vol. II. This, likewise, is the common Sense of Mankind; and the very Heathens have been excellent Examples to us of Reverential Behaviour in Places of publick Worship, and of the great Veneration we should have for them; of which innumerable Instances might be produc'd, out of their *Histories*, their *Writings*, and their *Laws*: Those particularly which made *Sacrilege*, or the Robbing of their Temples, so great and unpardonable a Crime; and those which made them *Sanctuaries*, or Places of inviolable Safeguard, for those distressed People that should fly to them for Refuge.

And at this Day 'tis well known, how sacred the Temples or *Moschs*, as they call them, are esteem'd among the *Turks*; with what Modesty, and Awe, and Reverence, they come to them, and perform their Religious Offices in them, and think no Charge too great to make them stately and magnificent. And as for the *Jews*, their Temple was as glorious as Expence and Art could make it; and God commanded them to Reverence it, and they did so to a very high degree for many years, and the Blessing of God was upon them; but

but at length when nothing but Vice, Vol. II. and Hypocrisy reign'd among them, and they made God's House a nest of Villains, and his Religion a Cloak for their Wickednesses, for those and other abominable Practices their Murdering our Saviour filling up the measure of their Iniquities; God suffer'd both that Holy Place, and their whole Church and Nation to be utterly destroy'd, and so to continue even until now.

Now, shall *Christians* come short of *Heathens*, and *Jews* and *Turks*, either in their veneration for their Churches, or their awful, devout Behaviour in them, and in their keeping them, not only clean and decent, but in some measure *Adorn'd* too, according to their several Abilities? This would be an errand Shame, and highly Criminal in the Eyes of God, and all good Men; and nothing is more worthy of just Reproach, than for those that profess to be Disciples of the Holy Jesus, (whose concern was so great for the Honour of his Fathers House, as we have seen) to have great regard to the Neatness and Ornament of their *own* Habitations, and sometimes to an extravagant Degree, and yet suffer the places of *God's* dwelling, and his Wor-
G 4 ship

Vol. II. ship to be neglected, even to downright *Nastiness*; as is too visible in very many Places.

I'm sure the Accounts we have of the Primitive Times of Christianity, tell us 'twas then far otherwise.

The Piety of those excellent People did in a very extraordinary manner shew it self, after the Example of their great Master, in their Zeal for the Places of Divine Worship; to beautify which, nothing was thought too costly and too good; nay indeed, far from good and costly enough, for that glorious Being who was pleas'd therein to be more especially present, when they assembled there to lay their Supplications before him.

And they perform'd their Devotions in them with the Fervour of Angels, join'd with that Reverential Awe and deep Humility, and Religious Fear and Dread, that became miserable, sinful Creatures, in the presence of their offended God.

But how unlike to this, in every respect, is our Practice now; and how far are we, consequently from the true Spirit of Christianity! A little *Decency* in our Churches, and our Behaviour

in them, is now thought to be a great Vol. II.
Matter, not over-often to be met with;
and truly by many is said to be *too much*. Is there not great Irreligion at the bottom of this? For, can a Man that heartily believes there is a God, and considers that such and such a Place is *his House*, dedicated to his Honour and Worship, and set apart for that use only, and in which he is pleased to be in an especial manner present; can a Man that truly believes these Things, and seriously considers them, be content to see those sacred Structures in such a Condition as he would not endure to see his own House in; and allow himself in such unseemly irreverend Deportment there, as would be counted exceeding rude and disrespectful, in the Presence of any that are his *Betters*? These Things are far from being consistent with true Piety, and a feeling Sense of Religion; which has always been observ'd to put Men upon a quite different way of treating both Things and Persons, that have the high Honour of being consecrated and set apart for the peculiar Service of the Majesty of Heaven.

But

Vol. II. But after all, the best and most acceptable Expression of the Reverence we have for God, is to obey his holy Will in real Purity of Heart and Life: and the best Ornament of the Places of his Worship, and which will most effectually engage his Presence with us, and make our Religious Offices like an Offering of a sweet smelling Savour to him, and bring down Showers of Blessings from above; is the exercise of true *Devotion* in them, proceeding from Souls full of holy Love and Gratitude, to the blessed God, and his eternally beloved Son, our most compassionate Saviour, and that Divine Spirit of them both by whom we are *seal'd to the day of Redemption*.

The Church, as one of the Ancients says, is *Heaven upon Earth*; and with the greatest Reason. For those glorious Realms above are therefore glorious, and the Seat of our consummate Happiness, because there the great and glorious God is pleas'd in so especial and inexpressible a manner to be present and manifest himself. If God therefore is peculiarly present in our Churches too, as has before been prov'd, and if the holy Angels do attend him there,

there, and join with us, as I doubt not Vol. II. but they do, when we praise and magnify his holy Name; and if the Devotions we offer there come from a heavenly Mind; what nearer resemblance of Heaven than this can there be here below?

The Scripture says expressly, That the Jews Temple at Jerusalem was fill'd with Angels, and the heavenly Host. Thus Isaiah says, Chap. 6. 1. *I saw the Lord sitting upon his Throne and his Train filled the Temple, about it stood the Seraphim; and the Psalmist tell us agreeably, The Chariots of God are twenty thousand,* *Psalm 68.* (i. e. a certain large number for that 17.

which is innumerable) *even thousands of Angels, and the Lord is among them as in the holy Place of Sinai, by which is express'd the Temple. And the Walls of it being carv'd with the Heads of Cherubims (as the Curtains of the Tabernacle were embroidred with them* *1 Kin. 6. 29.* *Exod. 26.* before) was an intimation to the People^{1.} that those bright Spirits were constantly there, as attending upon the Divine Object of their Worship.

And can we think that the Christian Temples are less honour'd than the Jewish was? And when God vouch-

Vol. II. vouchsafes to be especially present there, do we think his Angels fail to give their due attendance?

No certainly; and I make no question but they make a part of our Religious Assemblies, and join in our sacred Hymns, which are indeed *Angelical*. To *us* indeed *they* are *Invisible*, but *we* are not so to *Them*; who are curious Observers of our Behaviour and Deportment. And when they behold a truly pious Soul, breathing out sincere Devotions to God, in a posture like their own when they approach the Throne of the Divine Majesty; with bended Knees and lowly Prostrations, and all the decent Expressions of Reverence and holy Dread; how do they rejoice? And how gladly do they carry up the welcome News to Heaven!

And with what Grief and Shame, and Indignation and Contempt, do they look upon a careless, drowzy Wretch, whose Postures and Actions besit a Couch rather than a Church, and are more like those of a Swine upon a Dunghil, than of a Christian in the Court of the Lord's house?

1 Cor. II. 10. And therefore St. Paul urges the Corinthian Women to Modesty, Decency, and

and Humility, in their Religious Assemblies, because of the *Angels* that were present there. And St. *Chrysostome* chides those of his Diocese for Laughing, and Prating, and other unseemly Carriage in the Church; and tells them, That that holy Place must not be look'd upon as a *Fair*, or an *Exchange*, but as the *Court of God*, fill'd with Angels and Arch-Angels, and an Image and Representation of Heaven it self. How serious then, and humble, and reverential, should our Behaviour be? How should we compose our selves with the greatest Recollection and profoundest Awe, in such a Presence as is here!

And if our Employment be suitable to the sacredness of the Place, and the Presence; and we drive the Buyers and Sellers out of it, rid our Minds of all secular Thoughts, and raise our Souls above the World; we need not doubt of God's gracious acceptance of our hearty, tho' imperfect Service, here below, and of being at length admitted into his more immediate Presence, and joining with the Angelick Quire in singing his Praises eternally above. *Where Cherubim and Seraphim continually*

20

Vol. II. *do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory!*

But if we mock and abuse God in his own House, by false, hypocritical Pretences to Devotion and Worship, while our Thoughts and Designs are altogether Worldly (Sensual and Devilish) and thereby make those holy Places *Houses of Merchandize*, and even *Dens of Thieves*; what can we expect but his high Displeasure, and even to be driven from his divine Presence for ever, into those dismal Abodes of the Spirits of Darkness, where there is no Joy, no Peace or Comfort, but eternal Weeping and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth!

Practi-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
UPON OUR
Saviour's Miracles, &c.

III.

*A Devil cast out of a Woman
of Canaan's Daughter.*

MATTHEW xv. 21, 22, &c.

*Then Jesus went thence, and departed into
the Coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

*And behold, a Woman of Canaan came
out of the same Coast, and cry'd unto
him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord,
thou Son of David, my Daughter is
grievously vexed with a Devil.*

IN the Chapter before this, we have
an Account of St. John the Baptist's
being put to Death by Herod, which
when Jesus heard of, He departed by Mat. 14. 13
Ship

Vol. II *Ship into a desert Place apart*, that he might give his Thoughts full scope without Disturbance, to muse upon that hasty and violent end of his *Fore-runner*, who for boldly rebuking Vice, so soon lost his Liberty, and then his Life, to satisfy the Revenge of a lascivious Woman.

This could not but very much concern our compassionate Lord, and put him in mind too of the great Sufferings and cruel Death, which he himself in a few years must undergo for the same righteous Cause, the charitable endeavour to reform a wicked World; and that his Blood must atone for the Sins of it, and he be the propitiatory Sacrifice to appease God's Wrath against it.

Thus to employ his Thoughts upon this sad occasion, and to spend some time in Prayer to his heavenly Father for his Divine Aid and Support in carrying on the great Work he had begun through all the Dangers and Difficulties of it; was one Reason, we may suppose, of our Lords retiring into that *Desert Place*, after he had the melancholy News brought him of the *Baptist's* Death.

But

But being follow'd thither by the Vol. II.
Multitude, who now in vast numbers
throng'd after him, and his compassion
engaging him all the Day in healing
their Sick, and treating them with a
miraculous Repast in the Evening;
when all was over, that he might not
be disappointed of his design'd oppor-
tunity for Meditation and Devotion,
he dismiss'd the People, and constrain-
ed his Disciples to leave him there a-
lone for a while, and go before him in
the Ship they came in to the other
side of the Water, and he would follow
(in some other Ship they might suppose,
which usually tended there to carry
Passengers to and fro over the Lake.)
And when they were gone, *he went up* John 6.23.
into a Mountain apart to Pray, and con-
tinu'd there till towards Morning, and
then walk'd upon the Sea to his Disci-
ples, and gave them timely relief, be-
ing ready to perish in a Storm; and no
sooner was he got into the Ship to them
but they came safe to Shoar. *

* Upon
which Mi-
racles, see
Vol. 1.

Where being arriv'd, and meeting
with new opportunities of doing good,
and that in so amazing a manner, that
as many Diseas'd People as did but
touch the Hem of his Garment were
H made

Vol. II. made perfectly whole ; some envious ill-designing Scribes and Pharisees of *Jerusalem*, who probably might be sent as Spies upon him, began to interrupt him with their idle Cavils, and complain'd of his Disciples *Transgressing the Tradition of the Elders, in not washing their Hands when they eat Bread* : hoping it may be, to pick something out of his answer that might make matter of accusation against him to the *Sanhedrim*.

But he confounded them so with a *counter-Question*, illustrated by a notorious Instance, and then back'd it with so sharp a Rebuke, that they went away greatly enrag'd ; as you may see from the third to the 12th Verse of this 15th Chapter.

Verse 12.
13, 14.

And upon his Disciples coming to him soon after, and acquainting him how highly the Pharisees were offended at him ; after despising their Malice, and foretelling how fatal it would be in the conclusion to themselves, and those that were led by them ; he thought fit to conceal himself from them for a while, lest their Fury should put them upon serving him, as *Herod* had lately done the *Baptist*, before he had finish'd

finish'd his course of Preaching, which Vol. II.
he had but just almost begun, and sufficiently attested his Divine Mission by a long continu'd series of *Miracles*, which for their greatness, and number, should far surpass, all that *Moses*, and all the rest of the Prophets put together, had done of that nature before.

From thence therefore, that is, from *Math. 14.*
the Country of *Gennesaret*, went Jesus, ³⁴
and departed privately into the Coasts,
or Borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon*; hoping *Mark 7. 24.*
that there he might lye hid for a while,
and that no Body would suspect his
being gone to a place inhabited by
Gentiles only.

But 'twas not out of *fear* that our
blessed Master absconded thus, now,
and several times afterwards, as the
Gospel Story tells us he did, his undaunted
Courage and Constancy in all
his Sufferings, demonstrating the contrary;
no, 'twas only out of *Prudence*,
that he might avoid the rage of his
Enemies, till he had brought his great
good Work to some maturity, and put
the Affairs of his Heavenly Kingdom
in such a posture, that his Apostles
might go on successfully when he should

Vol. II. be taken from them: Whereas his Death, at the beginning of his appearing publicly, as this was, might have prevented his doing this, and have prov'd of very ill consequence. And it was but agreeable to the advice he *gave his Apostles a little before; when*
they Persecute you in this City, flee into another, which was founded upon the same Reason.'

*Matth. 10.
23.*

Now this shews, not only the *lawfulness*, but the *expediency* when we are engag'd in the propagation, or defence of a good Cause, to keep out of the reach of those that endeavour its ruin, and ours for the sake of it, as long as we can. And when we have done our best to serve it, and the Providence of God has order'd things so, that unless we betray it, we must suffer for it; then is the time to *gird up the Loins of our Mind*, and quit our selves like Men of Conscience and Religion, and be constant, even to the *Death*, that so we may attain the *Crown of Life*.

But to expose our selves to needless Dangers, even for the best Cause in the World, when we may avoid them without Sin; make the best of it is very great *Imprudence*: And we may do

do much more disservice and injury, Vol. II.
both to our Cause, and to our Selves,
that way than good. Indiscreet Zeal,
whether in the establishment or de-
fence of any thing, how excellent soe-
ver, being like the ungovern'd heat of
Soldiers in a Battle; the ready way to
put all things into Disorder and Con-
fusion, and thereby give the Enemy
the greatest Advantage he could wish
for. Whereas to *decline* the Charge of
a too powerful Enemy, till we can no
longer do it without Dishonour, and
then bravely to receive it, and sustain
it to the last; this is the true Courage
which shall not lose its Triumph. Just
thus, did our great Leader behave him-
self, and so should we.

And thus much for the occasion of
our Lord's going to the Coasts of *Tyre*
and *Sidon*, or to the utmost verge of
Galilee which border'd upon *Phanicia*,
where those Cities stood. And there-
fore 'tis, that the Woman who came to
our Saviour there, is call'd a *Greek*,
and by St. *Mark* a *Syrophanician*, as be-^{Mark 7.}
ing no *Hebrew*, but by Birth a *Syrian*,^{26.}
and by Religion a *Heathen*, (whom the
Jews promiscuously call'd *Greeks*, of
what Country soever they were,) and

Vol. II. dwelling in *Phenicia*. And she is call'd by St. *Matthew* a Woman of *Canaan*, that Country being the chief part of what was anciently call'd the Land of *Canaan*, as inhabited by *Canaan* himself and his Family, who was *Noah's* Grandson, and whose eldest Son *Sidon* gave Name to one of the chief Cities of it. This I mention to shew the reason of the variety of Expression in the two Evangelists, that relate this Story.

Gen. 9. 18.
10. 15.

Now this Woman coming out of those Coasts into the adjoining Parts of *Galilee* (as Borderers, tho' of different Nations, have intercourse upon occasion with each other) by good Providence saw *Jesus* passing by; and observing him to be attended by his Disciples, 'tis probable ask'd one of them who he was? How else, being of another Nation and Religion, and he a Stranger in those Parts, should she come to know him? And as soon as she understood that he was *Jesus of Nazareth*, whose Fame no doubt she had heard of, which we are told went
Mat. 4. 24. throughout all *Syria*, and conversing so frequently with the *Jews* of that part of *Galilee* (how else should she know he could

could cure her possess'd Daughter, and cry so earnestly to him for his Help?) she immediately thought of her poor Child at home, and look'd upon this as a happy opportunity of getting her dispossess'd by the great Prophet of the *Jews*, who she had heard had often done such Cures, and therefore resolves to lose no time, but cry'd unto him (in the Style she had heard the *Jews* make mention of their expected *Messias*, thinking that would be the best way to gain his Attention to her, and procure his Favour) saying, *have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil.*

Her Child's Calamity was hers, and she declar'd it to be so; as 'twill be of any Parent that has not lost all natural Affection: And where there is much Tendernefs of Nature, join'd with such apprehensive quickness, as appears to be in this Woman throughout the Story, such sad Things make a very deep Impression.

But 'twas well for her that she had so feeling a Sense of her Daughters deplorable Condition; for that made her sollicite Jesus so importunately for Relief: And 'twas well for her too, that

Vol. II. she had such quickness of Apprehension to nick the favourable opportunity, and such presence of Mind and readiness of Wit, as well as strength of Faith, to make so good a use of it as we find she did.

The Gifts of Nature are of excellent use to the noblest Purposes if well apply'd; and smartness of Parts where there is a good disposition at the bottom, is of great Advantage in *Religion*, as well as other Things; and will enable us to proceed in it with great readiness, and with great success: Improving every happy opportunity God's Providence shall give us of advancing our best Interest, as this Woman did her casual meeting with our Lord.

But if the concern of this Heathen was so great for the Devil's possession of the *Body* of her Daughter, that she begg'd with such extraordinary earnestness that Christ would help her, as we shall see by and by; how much sorer an Affliction is it for any Christian to see the *Souls* of his Children possess'd with hellish Vices, such as won't only make them miserable upon this Earth, but bring both Body and Soul

Soul to Hell for ever ! How should we Vol. II.
fly to Jesus for Succour in such a sad
Case as this ; and with our incessant
Prayers pour'd out with the utmost
Fervour, endeavour to incline him who
alone is able to do it, to turn their
Hearts, and rescue them from the
Devil's Tyranny by his prevailing
Grace !

This is but Charity to the greatest
Strangers to us, an Expression of com-
mon Christian Compassion to every
proper Object of it, let him be who he
will. How deep then should our Con-
cern be, how earnest and unweary our
Supplications at the Throne of Grace,
when our own *Offspring*, or those that
upon any other Account bear a near
Relation to us ; are so unhappy as to
be under the Dominion of Sin and Lust,
and live as if they were acted by an
unclean Devil !

When all other ways of Reformation
fail, this may be successful ; and as a
venerable Bishop said to *Monicha*, the
Mother of St. *Austin*, in the time of her
Sons dissolute Youth (to whom no
good Advice was wanting, nor any
Methods that were proper to reclaim
him) *A Child for whom so many Prayers*
have

Vbl. II. have been made, and such Rivers of Tears Confes. Aug. shed, can scarce miscarry. The Event gust. lib. 3. shew'd it to be so in St. Austin, and no c. 12.

doubt in many others both before and since; let us, therefore, in the like uncomfortable Case, take the like Course, and we have great reason to hope, that by the merciful Power of God, we shall in time have the like success; but we must stay his leisure. *I waited patiently for the Lord, says the Ps. 40. 1. Psalmist, and he inclined unto me, and heard my Cry; and so did the poor, afflicted Woman here in the Gospel. And after many severe Repulses, as we shall see in the Sequel, enough one would think to discourage her, and make her despair of succeeding; her Faith likewise, and Patience, and humble Importunity prevail'd.*

These Things, no doubt, were written for our Instruction, how to behave our selves under such severe Tryals and Afflictions; when therefore our Case is such, let us go and do likewise, still putting our Trust in God, and however our hopes may be delay'd for a while, believing that at last our Sorrow shall be turn'd into Joy. But, as I said, we must patiently wait for it, as this poor Woman did.

For,

For, notwithstanding the real de- Vol.II.
plorableness of her Condition, the earnestness of her Cry, and the tender Nature of the most compassionate Jesus, whose Bowels always yerned over the Miserable, and put him upon giving them a ready, speedy Relief; he seem'd utterly regardless of her, and pass'd on without giving her a Word, as if below his notice.

Now this silence of his, as 'twas a great Damp to be sure to the afflicted Woman (Sights and Neglects never going so near us, as when they are shewn to us by those to whom we apply ourselves for Succour in our Distress;) so it could not but seem strange to his Disciples, knowing the sweet Temper of their good Master, and with what Commiseration such Objects of Pity us'd to be treated by him.

But we may learn from hence, not presently to doubt of the goodness of God towards us, and conclude ourselves cast off and disregarded by his Providence, because, when we cry unto him in our Troubles he seems to take no notice of us, and we continue as we were, without Help and Comfort. For there may be very wise Reasons

Vol.II. sons for such Delays, and seeming Neglects, such as Time will shew us, and which, when we know ~~them~~, we shall intirely be satisfy'd with, and see how they tended to our greater Good.

And therefore, in the mean time, let us *possess our Souls in Patience*, and support our Spirits with Hope, *continuing instant in Prayer*, and keeping up our Confidence in him whose Mercies fail not, and when our Hearts are in heaviness applying our selves to the Ministers of Christ, that they would speak Comfort to us, and intercede for us with their great Master: Let us take this course, and at length we shall be heard.

And this was the course this afflicted Heathen took. When she found that Jesus would not seem to hear her, nor give her one cheering Word, she was not presently discourag'd, nor did she walk off in a moody discontent, and give over her Suit, as if 'twould be to no purpose; but she redoubled her cry, and follow'd him still closer, and begg'd of his Disciples that they would speak for her to him, and was so earnest, so importunate with them, as if resolv'd to take no denial, that for
their

their own ease and quiet, and even Vol. II.
for shame too, they went to their Master, and besought him saying, send her ^{Ver. 23.}
away for she cryeth after us: Grant her
what she would have, that she may
cease her loud and troublesome Importunity, which don't look well here in the publick way; This will silence her, but nothing else.

Now was the poor Suppliant full of anxious Expectation what Answer Jesus would give; and not without hope, as we may imagine, that for his Disciples sake, tho' not for hers, he would be gracious to her. But upon this, He answer'd and said, I am not sent but to the lost Sheep of the house of Israel.

He perceiv'd, either by her Habit, or her Dialect, that she was no Jew; and therefore told his Disciples that she was not a proper Object of his Mercy, which at present was confin'd to the House of Israel, to whom he was in the first place sent, and to whom alone, in his own Person, he was to Preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel, and prove the Truth of it by Miracles of Mercy. And which was but agreeable to the Charge he gave to Them ^{Mat. 10. 5.}
not long before, when he sent them forth

Vol. II. forth upon the same blessed Errand, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles*; and he must not break his own Rules, and give that Offence to the *Jews* himself, which by that Prohibition he design'd to prevent *their* doing.

This was enough to satisfy the Disciples, and make them see the Reason of his taking no notice of the Woman before; but 'twas far from satisfying *her*, and this Answer of Jesus was much more disheartning than his former Silence. For it seem'd quite to cut off all Hope, she being, as a Heathen, incapable of that Mercy, which was to be shewn only to the House of *Israel*.

And what should the poor wretched Creature do in such a Case as this? Here was something very like a flat denial, and that grounded upon a Reason, which she saw his *Disciples* had nothing to reply to, much less could *she* know how to answer; and one might expect to find her so far mov'd upon it, as to change her former humble Supplication into severe Reflections upon the Uncharitableness, and even Inhumanity of the *Jews*, in doing no good to any but themselves, and then in a Rage to have left them.

But

But tho' it dash'd and griev'd her so Vol. II.
much, that we don't find she cry'd
aloud after them as before, yet she
follow'd them still, with plenty of
Sighs and Tears no doubt, and a Heart
ready to break with Sorrow, and full
of Thought how to incline Jesus at
last to grant her her request; which
her great Opinion of his Goodness and
Compassion to one in her sad Case,
would not let her quite despair of, for
all this. And when she saw Jesus go
into a House, as we find he did *Mark*
7. 24. an Inn probably, where he de-
sign'd to refresh himself, and stay 'till
he thought fit to return from whence
he came, and appear again in publick;
she made bold to go in where he was,
(and such a wounded Spirit as *hers* does
not use to stand upon the Niceties of
Civility and Complement) and fell
down at his feet and worship'd him, and *Mar. 7. 25.*
made a shift, with the interruption of
many a deep Sob, to bring out, *Lord Mar. 15.*
help me! *25.*

This was all she could do to move
him to take Pity on her; and there she
lay prostrate, between Hope and Fear,
waiting her Doom from his blessed
Mouth: And no doubt but this was in-
deed

Vol. II deed a very moving Spectacle to the compassionate Jesus, and one might well expect to hear a kind and tender Answer from him. But instead of this he treated her more roughly than
Mar. 7. 27. ever, and said unto her, *Let the Children first be fill'd, for it is not meet to take the Childrens Bread and cast it unto the Dogs.*

What could be more cutting than this, and pierce her Soul down to the very quick! she was too ready of Apprehension not to know the meaning of it; and the meaning of it was so harsh and grating to one of any Spirit and Resentment, which this Woman had no want of, that one would think the next thing we should hear of would be her falling into some excess of Passion, and giving a free vent to what an exasperated Spirit might suggest, and which one of her Wit, could not want Words to express.

But instead of this, with a mighty command of her self, and extraordinary quickness of Thought, she presently catch'd at the Word *Dog*, and apply'd it as it was meant to her self, but without any sign of discomposure at such a reproachful Name, and gave it this ingenious turn, *Truth Lord, yet the*

the Dogs eat of the Childrens Crums, which fall from their Master's Table. Glad she was, of the obscurest hint, of any the meanest relation she might claim to Christ, and the House of Israel; if a Dog, then a retainer to the House and Family, a kind of Servant to the Master, and not unuseful for some purposes; and therefore, tho' not to be fed with the *Childrens Bread*, yet not to be starved neither, but suffer'd to lick up the Crums and Offals, that fall from their abundance.

Thus did she, by this smart Answer, very movingly insinuate, that the Mercy she begg'd, tho' she was a Heathen, and one that in comparison with God's Children, and peculiar People might be stil'd a Dog, (as the *Jews* in scorn did use to call the *Gentiles*) might yet be well bestow'd upon her, without the least loss or injury to any of the House-hold; 'twas but one little pittance of accidental Favour by the *by*, and that in her great necessity, which she desir'd, and hop'd he would not use her *worse* than *Dogs* are us'd, but let her taste one small Crum of that tender Pity and Compassion, of which, as she had heard, the Children did partake in so great plenty.

I

Now

Vol. II. Now when our blessed Lord had work'd the poor Woman up to this highth, and by his treating her so roughly had sufficiently try'd her patience and humility, and made that noble exemplary Faith more conspicuous, which he perceiv'd was in her; and for which reasons it was that the most meek and merciful Jesus forc'd himself, even against his nature to deal thus hardly by her: He thought it time to change the uncomfortable Scene, and make her *hear the Voice of Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which he had broken might rejoyce.* And then, with a more cheerful friendly Brow, he answer'd, and said unto her, *O Woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her Daughter was made whole from that very Hour.* And when she was come to her House, to which, we may Suppose, she even flew, with the Wings of Faith and Hope, and longing Desire, and joyful Expectation; with infinite Satisfaction, (and which was much the greater for being gain'd with so much difficulty) *she found the Devil gone out, and her Daughter laid upon the Bed.*

Thus like Jacob, did she wrestle with the Prince of the Angels, and would not
WOZ I let

let him go till he had blessed her; and Vol. II.
at length prevail'd. Thus was Patience and Humility, a steady Faith, and unwearied Importunity rewarded; and thus did a severe time of tryal, clear up into Joy and Triumph.

Now from this remarkable Occurrence, we may learn the reasons of God's seeming severity to the best People, the great afflictions he lays upon them, and that for a long continuance, notwithstanding their repeated Cryes to him for Relief and Succour, when all is kindness at the bottom: And we may learn too, how to behave our selves under such circumstances, even as this Woman did.

As for the reasons of God's often dealing in this rough manner, by those whom he Loves best, and designs the greatest Favours for; I suppose they are chiefly those that follow. As

First, that he may exercise their *passive* Virtues, which are indeed the noblest of all, and teach them the art of *Suffering*, with that firmness of Mind which becomes a Christian; and learn them to bear their Cross, in some measure as he did before them, when he shall please to call them to it.

Vol. II. Should every thing be just as we would have it, we should soon grow unreasonably humorsome and peevish, delicate and nice ; and run into such extravagancies too, as if not *check'd* would be the ruine of our Happiness both Temporal and Eternal.

But how should we be able to bear such a *check*, after a long interrupted *Indulgence* ; much less the smart of a *severe Correction*, which yet would soon be absolutely necessary ? And then, to what a miserable condition would this excessive Kindness reduce us ! Making much rougher Methods needful for us, and at the same rendring us very unfit to bear them with any thing of Temper ; either quite sinking under them, or else exasperated by them into desperate Rage and Fury. So that we must either be cocker'd and humor'd on, let the consequence be what it will ; or else the Remedy, will be in danger of proving as bad or worse than the Disease.

But suppose, which yet does not often happen, that the Man's constant Prosperity in his own *private* Affairs had no ill effect upon him, but he continu'd in that pious, humble, good Disposition

position, in which a Christian should Vol. II.
be, under such happy circumstances ;
how would he be able to bear the
shock of *publick* Troubles, Persecution,
for instance, upon account of his Re-
ligion, should he happen to live in such
trying times. What would this *Ten-*
derling do, when he must either *Betray*,
or *Suffer* for, a righteous Cause, turn
Apostate to Christianity, or deny any
fundamental Article of it, and sub-
scribe to damnable Errors, or else lose
his Estate, his Liberty, his very Life
in the Profession and Defence of the
Truth?

Which side of the Scale would weigh
down with such a one, we may easily
imagine ; and 'twould be very much
indeed, should those that never yet
knew what Trouble, or so much as
Uneasiness was, unless it were such
as their own unreasonable niceness and
peevishness occasion'd, when they were
cloy'd with Prosperity, and had more
of this World's Happiness, than they
could tell what to do with : 'Twould
be very much if such favourites of
Fortune as these, should bear up brave-
ly under the severities of a Persecution.

Vol. II. Nothing therefore more needful, upon all accounts, than that we should by degrees learn Patience, or the art of Suffering, as I call'd it; and how can that be learn'd without Exercise and Tryal? And 'tis by being enur'd to *private* Troubles and afflictions, and the often crossing our Desires and Hopes in those lesser instances of Tryal, that we must grow hardy enough to sustain the weight of those *publick* Calamities that God may see fit to bring upon a Church or Nation.

By this domestick Discipline, we are train'd up to the Christian warfare; and taught how to behave our selves in the most difficult Times, with that Courage and Constancy which becomes good Soldiers of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, like raw, and unexperienc'd Men, that never were acquainted with hardship, but always nurs'd up in tenderness and ease; as soon as danger threatens, we shall, with base Cowardice, throw down our Arms and yield. But

Secondly, God sees it needful sometimes to treat us a little roughly, and mix some severity now and then with his kindness, to make us *know our selves*,
to

to keep us *humble*, and in due dependence upon his Providence. Vol. II.

There is nothing more apt to make us proud, than a constant *flow* of Prosperity; we are then very prone to forget our selves, and grow high and lofty in our Thoughts, and full of undue conceits of our great desert and worth, and that we are much in God's Favour, because we partake so largely of his Blessings. And 'tis not seldom, that this proceeds to a forgetfulness of our great Benefactor too; and a long uninterrupted Happiness, looks so much like *self-sufficiency*, that we are too ready to fancy it to be so, and disregard the great *Fountain* of good, from whence every the least stream of it is deriv'd to us, and the whole Creation.

Now to cure these unnatural swellings of our Minds, which are of exceeding ill consequence, and bring us down to a just Opinion of our selves, and our intire dependance upon God; 'tis needful he should hold his Hand sometimes, and for a while withdraw his Favours, and make an exchange of Joy and Comfort, for Trouble and Affliction, and keep us under that Affliction notwithstanding our earnest

I 4 begging

Vol. II. begging him to remove it, till it has wrought that good effect for which 'twas sent, and we begin to see what *nothings* we are of our selves, and that all our sufficiency, in all respects is of God.

This will make us modest, thankful and contented, and conduce the most of any thing to our true Relish, and full Enjoyment of every instance of the divine Bounty to us; whereas an uninterrupted State of prosperous Successes in every thing, is really the most unhappy condition we can be placed in: Sometimes transporting us beyond our selves we know not whither, spoiling the taste of the greatest Comforts by an overcharge of them, as *the full Stomach loaths the Honey Comb*, and too often proving the Parent not only of the greatest *uneasiness*, and *discontents*, but of the most *destructive Vices* here, and ending in the extreamest Misery hereafter.

'Tis a kind severity therefore, that is design'd to prevent all this; and will do it effectually if Men have any Thought and Reflection, and will act like Men.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Affliction is apt to make Vol. II.
People devout, and the continuance
of it more fervently so; and that's ano-
ther Reason why God sends troubles
upon good Men, and is a great while
before he removes them, tho' they
earnestly beg it of him.

Prayer is of so great advantage to us,
and so mightily conducive to the In-
crease of true Religion in our Souls; that
our gracious God is pleas'd to take all
methods to engage us in the frequent
Practice of it, and raise it to the great-
est height of Pervency. And be-
cause we are too apt to neglect it, and
grow cold and formal in it, when a
constant Prosperity has made our Spi-
rits gay, and light, and trifling, in
great Mercy he gives such a turn to
our Affairs sometimes, as may make
us serious, and thoughtful, and bring
us nearer to him in Prayer and Suppli-
cation, when we want his help and
support. And that our Devotion may
be rais'd to its due pitch, he seems not
to regard us for a while; but rather to
turn his Ear from us, as in great dis-
pleasure, and add to our Affliction in-
stead of lessening or taking it away.

For

Vol. II.

For this is the most likely way to put us upon using that grateful *violence* to Heaven, which never fails of success; to make our Addresses to the Throne of Grace so many, so vigorous, and so importunate, that they cannot be deny'd. And what a holy Flame will this enkindle in our Souls; how will it raise us far above the World, and open our Eyes to see the vanity of the best things in it! And by conversing thus with God, so warmly and so often, and having such a feeling Sense, that in his Favour only is *Life*, true solid Satisfaction and lasting Joy; we shall become *Heavenly-minded*, and have such spiritual Relishes as will make us very indifferent to every thing besides.

Gen. 24.

And 'twill very much endear the Blessing likewise that we Pray for, when we come to enjoy it after having known the want of it so long, and been fain to press so hard to obtain it, and receiv'd so many repulses and denials. And as the Joy between *Joseph* and his Brethren, when he made himself known unto them with great tenderness and endearment, was much the greater, and more surprizing for his rough

rough dealing with them before, who Vol. II.
yet, all along design'd the kindest
things for them, and felt the yernings
of a Brother's Bowels toward them;
so will the conclusion be of all God's
harsher treatment of his People, which
is intended as a means of heightning
their Satisfaction, and their Joy, when
his Frowns shall be turn'd into Smiles,
and their importunity crown'd with
Success.

In the last place, God tries us in this
manner, that our *Faith* may be ap-
prov'd, and become conspicuous and
exemplary, and shine with the greater
Lustre in the midst of a faithless Gene-
ration.

Nothing can be a more engaging
sight, than the patient, humble, devout,
fiducial Behaviour of a good Christian
under the pressures of a long Affliction;
and our holy Religion never appear'd
more Charming, than when the
Church was in Tears, and under a
Cloud of Sorrow.

'Tis an easy matter to profess Faith
in God, and relyance upon his Provi-
dence, when all things go easy and well
with us; but *then* will the *sincerity* of
this be prov'd, both to our selves and
others,

Vol. II. others, when there is a melancholy alteration in our Affairs, and Trouble comes on apace, and we know what *Suffering* means, and are like to know still more of it. When our whole Prospect round about, is thus dark and dismal, and threatens new Storms, which we know not how to avoid, nor where to go for shelter; and when too God seems to take no notice of us, and we cry to him for help in vain, and in the mean time see the Wicked Prosper and Flourish, while we, in all appearance, have cleans'd our Hearts to no purpose, and wash'd our Hands in Innocency: Then is the time to shew that we believe in earnest in the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of the great Governor of the World, and are fully perswaded that he will finally manage all things for our best Advantage; that we can look beyond the present, to the Great and Eternal Things of a future State, and by the firm Belief and Expectation of *them*, support our drooping Spirits *now*, and calmly wait God's time of Succour.

When we can say with *Job*, and with the same sincerity, *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him, and our heart is not turn'd*

Job. 13.
15.

turn'd back from him, nor do our steps decline from his ways, tho' he hath dealt sorely by us, and even cover'd us with the shadow of death; when nothing can separate us from the love of him, and we receive his hardest usage, with reverence and affection, and humble submission to his Pleasure, and are never discourag'd by it from drawing near to him in Prayer, but rather quickned and inspirited to greater degrees of Fervency, and an incessant Devotion: When we can behave ourselves in this manner under Affliction, then is our Faith irreproveable; this is to act with the true noble Spirit of a Disciple of Jesus, and must needs be of excellent Influence to all that shall behold it, and shall not fail of an ample, glorious recompence at last.

To exercise then, and approve, and make exemplary, and then to crown these passive Virtues, being God's main design in treating his best Servants with such seeming roughness and severity as he often does; let us be careful not to frustrate that his gracious Design, by our peevishness and impatience, or any irreligious, distrustful Carriage, when he pleases to visit us with Affliction;

Vol. II. ction ; but make it our great endeavour to behave our selves as the Woman of *Canaan* did under her severe Tryal, and we shall speed at last as well as she did.

And what a shameful thing will it be for a *Christian*, to be wanting in what was so very exemplary in a *Heathen*, and so highly commended by our Lord himself, and rewarded with a full Grant of all that she desir'd. O *Woman*, say'd he, *great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And shall our Faith be less? If it be so, so shall our reward be too, both here, and at the final Day of Retribution. Lord, therefore, *increase our Faith, Lord we believe, help thou our unbelief!*

Indeed, 'tis *Faith* that is all in all, and where that is strong and vigorous, all other Graces will be so too; and therefore 'tis the sincerity of *that*, that is chiefly regarded by God.

As here, in the instance of this Woman, tho' her *Patience* was great, in bearing so many repulses; her *Meekness* and *Humility* great in enduring with so great Temper, such Contempt as Christ shew'd to her, when he compar'd her to a *Dog*; her *Devotion* great in

in following him with such restless Impor- Vol. II.
tunity: Yet her *Faith* being the
Spring of all this, 'twas the greatness
of *that* only which he particularly com-
mended, and mention'd as the motive
that inclin'd him to grant her re-
quest.

And great indeed, was her *Faith* to
the very last; for tho' Jesus did not go
with her to cast the Devil out of her
possess'd Daughter, but only said unto
her, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,*
or as St. Mark relates it, *Go thy way,*
the Devil is gone out of thy Daughter:
Yet she made no doubt of his Power to
cure her, tho' at a distance, but went
home in full Assurance that she should
find his Word made good.

One thing more we may observe,
and so conclude; and that is, if those
great *Virtues*, *Patience*, *Humility*, *Meek-*
ness, and fervent *Devotion*, are not
thoroughly acceptable without *Faith*,
how much less will bare *Wit* and *Parts*
be? And how mightily will they find
themselves mistaken, who because they
can talk handsomely about Religion,
and have pious Phrases and Expressi-
ons ready at their Command, think
they are the Objects of God's peculiar
Esteem and Regard!

The

Vol. II. The Woman here in the Gospel, shew'd a great deal of smartness, and a quick ready Wit; but had there not been something much more valuable at the bottom, 'twould have stood her in very little stead; and 'twas her Faith, not her ingenious Answer to our Lord, (tho' that was more than ordinary, and not displeasing to him) that procur'd of him the grant of her Petition.

Heb. 11. 38. All the antient Worthies, obtain'd a good Report thro' Faith; and so must we.

Heb. 12. 1. Wherefore, seeing we are compass'd about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, so many noble Examples of Faith and Constancy; Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

Consider him therefore, lest ye be weary'd and faint in your Minds; and tho' no chastning for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness to all that are exercis'd thereby.

“ And

“ And we humbly beseech thee, O Vol. II.
“ Father, mercifully to look upon our
“ Infirmities, and for the Glory of thy *Collect at*
“ Name turn from us all those Evils *the end of*
“ which we most righteously have de- *the Litany.*
“ serv'd; and grant that in all' our
“ Troubles we may put our whole
“ Trust and Confidence in thy Mercy,
“ and evermore serve thee in Holiness
“ and Pureness of Living, to thy Ho-
“ nour and Glory, through our only
“ Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ
“ our Lord. *Amen!*

K

Practi-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
UPON OUR
Saviour's Miracles, &c.

IV.

*A blind Man restor'd to sight
near Bethsaida.*

MARK viii. 22, &c.

*And Jesus cometh to Bethsaida, and they
bring a blind Man unto him, and be-
sought him to Touch him;*

*And he took the blind Man by the Hand,
and led him out of the Town; and when
he had spit on his Eyes, and put his
Hands upon him, he ask'd him if he saw
ought?*

*And he looked up and said, I see Men as
Trees walking.*

*After that, he put his Hands again upon
his Eyes, and made him look up; and he
was*

was restor'd and saw every man clearly. Vol. II.
And he sent him away to his house, saying,
neither go into the Town, nor tell it to
any in the Town.

WHEN our Lord was return'd from his short stay on the Borders of Tyre and Sidon, where he cur'd the Woman of Canaan's Daughter, as we have heard; and as he pass'd through Decapolis had restor'd Hearing and Speech to one that was Deaf and Dumb, whom the People brought to him when he was come to the Sea of Galilee, in order to pass over into the Parts of Dalmanutha; and had fed four thousand with seven Loaves, and a few small Fishes: As soon as he was arriv'd, the Pharisees began to fall upon him again in their usual ensnaring manner, so that it griev'd him much to see their obstinate Infidelity, and made him Sigh deeply in his Spirit, and then he left them, as Men upon whom he found he could do no good, and entering into the Ship again, departed to the other side. And when he came to Bethsaida, a new Object of Charity was brought to him, a blind Man, whom they besought him to Touch, that so

Mar. 7.
7, 8.

Mar. 8. 12.

Vol. II. his Sight might be restor'd. But there is reason to question, whether those that brought him, did it as believing Christ could cure him, or rather in hopes to expose him, supposing he could not.

For the People of *Bethsaida*, notwithstanding the many Miracles he had wrought among them, and in their Neighbourhood, continu'd obstinate in their Infidelity, and were Incorrigible in their Wickedness; (both usually going together) as appears by the Woe our Saviour denounc'd against them, in the 11th of St. *Matthew*, Verse 21.

And therefore, thinking 'twas beyond his Power to restore Sight to the *Blind*, nothing of that Nature being as yet done by him, as we may conjecture from St. *Mark's* mentioning no such Miracle before now (who is look'd upon as the most exact of all the Evangelists in laying down the Series and Order of our Saviours Actions) they hop'd by this means to put him to a stand; intending, if he was not able to do it, to make use of it to his great Disgrace, and improve it into an Argument, of (what they had once be-

before objected to him) his performing Vol. II.
the other strange Cures he had ^{Mark 3.}
wrought, by some ill and Diabolical ^{22.}
Arts, and not, as he pretended, by the
Power of God.

But tho' this malicious Design of
theirs could not be unknown to our ^{Joh. 2. 25.}
Lord (*who knew what was in Man*) and ^{6.} ^{64.}
made them unworthy of any more of
his beneficial Miracles which were but
thrown away upon them; yet his Pity
to the blind Man mov'd him to take
him by the Hand, and lead him out of
that Infidel Town (an Emblem of his
bringing us out of Ignorance, and Un-
belief and Sin, into his marvellous
Light) and when he was withdrawn to
a sufficient distance from] it, and ^{Had Verse 23.}
spit on his Eyes and put his Hands upon
him, he ask'd him if he saw ought?

This first Touch of Jesus brought
some Glimmerings of Light into his be-
nighted Eyes, so that he had a dim,
confus'd sight of our Lord and his Dis-
ciples, and those that out of Curiosity
went so far with him; and when he
look'd up, he said he saw *Men walking*
like so many moving Trees. ^{This Verse 24.}
shew'd, that the blind Man had *some*
Faith in the Power of Christ to restore

Vol. II. his sight to him, though those that brought him had none, but did it for other base Ends; but it shew'd likewise, that his Faith was as *Imperfect* as his Cure.

For *Faith*, or, as it signifies in this case, a strong unwavering Perswasion that Jesus was able to work those miraculous Cures for which the People apply'd themselves to him, was the condition without which he would not work them; as is evident from all those Places where he asks whether they *believ'd that he was able to do so and so*, and upon their answering they *did so believe*, his saying, *as you have believ'd so be it done unto you, thy Faith hath made thee whole*, and the like: And the reason of his not doing many Miracles in his *own Country*, and for which he was much blam'd by his Relations, was *because of their unbelief*. Not that he *could* not heal even those that did not *believe* he could, (for what can bound Omnipotence?) but because it was not reasonable and fitting that he should.

Luke 4.
23.
Matt. 13.
58.

For the great end of his working Miracles was to confirm the truth of his Doctrin by such *divine Evidence*; and

and to incline Men thereby to believe in him as the Messias, and embrace that holy Religion he came to teach the World, in order to their eternal Salvation. And therefore having first shewn his miraculous Power upon Creatures that were not *capable* of Faith, in such an amazing manner as was abundantly sufficient to cause it in those that were; as when he *turn'd Water into Wine*, multiply'd *five Loaves* and *two small Fishes* into Provision enough for *five thousand Men*, besides Women and Children, and again with *seven Loaves* fed four thousand, and yet more left at last than was at first; when he *still'd Tempests* and *calm'd the raging Sea* with his Word, and commanded a prodigious number of Fishes into St. Peter's Nets, in the same place where he had been toiling all the Night before but could take nothing: After this, he might well expect and require that Men, who were *capable* of believing and confiding in that miraculous Power, which 'twas so evident he was endow'd with by God, should so believe and confide in it, before they experienc'd the happy Effects of it upon *themselves*, especially since 'twas in

Vol. II. order to their *farther* believing in him as the promis'd *Messias*. And therefore, where he found an obstinate Infidelity, which the Miracles he had already wrought could not remove, he would work no more, as being to no purpose; for to work Miracles which he knew would signify nothing to the end for which they were wrought, was what the Wisdom of God would never think fit to do.

But where there was Faith already, Christ always confirm'd and rewarded it with further beneficial Miracles, as opportunity was offer'd; and which was the most effectual way to create a *full assurance* of Faith in him as the Christ the Saviour of the World.

And thus it was in the Case of this blind Man: he would not cure him in *Bethsaida*, because of the invincible Prejudice those People had against him, notwithstanding all the Miracles he had formerly wrought among them; and he gave the Blind Man but an *imperfect* sight at first, because of that mixture of *Doubting* which he perceiv'd was in him, as influenc'd by those with whom he had convers'd. But when upon his beginning to see, tho' but

but confus'dly, his Faith in the Power Vol. II.
of Jesus was increas'd, and his doubting remov'd; then, as being become a fit Subject of his healing Power, he put his Hands upon his Eyes, *and made him look up, and he was presently and intirely restor'd, and saw every Man clearly.*

And thus it is with us still; 'tis according to our *Faith* that God will deal with us; and when we want his Help, and apply our selves to him for it, our Success will be proportionable to our Belief and Affiance in the All-sufficient Power and Goodness of the Most High.

And the more honourable Thoughts we have of God, of his Kindness and Beneficence, and tender regard to the happiness of all his Creatures, that he is Compassionate and Merciful, and ready to exert his Almighty Power in doing Good to those that place their Hope and Trust in him; the more Expressions shall we have of his Providential Care over us, and our fiducial reliance upon him shall not fail of distinguishing Marks of his Favour.

But the want of this Faith, is highly displeasing to God, as arguing a jealous distrust of him; and 'tis apt to engage

Vol. II. engage us in practices that are inconsistent not only with *Christianity*, but even *moral Honesty*, to help, to provide for, to *secure* our selves as we call it, as if neglected, and even forsaken by Providence, and that the great Governor of the World had forgot his Promises of being our Shield and Defence.

And what can be more provoking, than that which reflects so much dishonour upon God, and is the very highth of Ingratitude and digs up the very Foundations of Duty and Obedience to him! And he resents it accordingly, and often punishes it with a real Desertion; as we may see at large in the 78th Psalm, and shall have occasion more particularly to shew in the sequel.

Thus have we given an account of the Reasons why our Lord requir'd *Faith* so strictly in order to his working his miraculous Cures upon Men, and what *kind* of Faith that was; and why God hath still the same regard to it in conferring his peculiar Favours and Blessings upon us now.

Ano-

Another thing we may observe from Vol. II. our Lord's restoring Sight to this blind Man by *degrees*, tho' he could as well have done it in an *Instant*; is the gradual Steps of our *Spiritual Illumination*, or our improvement in the Knowledge of God, and the great Truths of Religion, as we concur and co-operate with the divine Grace and Assistance afforded for that purpose.

It hath always been the wise Method of the Father of Lights to enlighten the dark World by *degrees*; to advance in the Manifestation of himself and his Truth by little and little, as Men were able to bear it; and to make one Revelation *preparatory* to a greater and a clearer, shining more and more, from the first early *Dawn*, unto the *perfect Day*: As is evident from the whole progress of reveal'd Religion from the beginning of it in the first Ages of the World, until Jesus the glorious *Sun of Righteousness* appear'd in full meridian Splendor, to enlighten all the dark corners of the World, with his healing, cheering Rays.

For, a Light too strong for the Faculty is of no use, but rather causes Dark-

Vol. II. Darkness and Confusion; and he that from a long Confinement to a dark Dungeon, is brought immediately into full Sun-shine, is blinded (as St. Paul was) with excess of Light. And therefore when those whom our Lord restor'd from Blindness to Sight were able immediately, and without any trouble and uneasiness, to see clearly and distinctly the various Objects about them, as they always were; 'twas a convincing Argument that the Cure was Supernatural, and almost another Miracle.

Acts 22.
11.

God therefore, in his great Wisdom saw it needful to let in Spiritual Light upon the World, not like an over-flowing Deluge all at once, but in proportion to the present capacity of it; and as that was enlarg'd, then to let in more, and so still on, till the *Day Star from on High did visit it.*

And as he did by Mankind in general, so he does by every particular Person, and for the same Reasons.

Till our *natural* Darkness is remov'd, we are not capable of any degree of Spiritual Light, and therefore that must first be chas'd away by *Baptism*, that great *Illuminating* Rite, as 'twas
stil'd

still'd by the primitive Church, But Vol. II.
because, even after that first incapacity is gone off, there still remains a great weakness in our intellectual Faculties since the Fall; they must be strengthened by degrees, before they can be able to receive the full Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. ^{Psal. 44. 18.}

For, tho' the whole *Practice* of the Christian Religion is so evidently our *reasonable Service* that we can't but see the reason of the most exalted Duties of it when clearly propounded to us, and acknowledge the great Excellency of them; yet some of the *Theories* of it are so sublime, that the understanding must be prepar'd to receive them by more than ordinary application of Thought, and devout addresses by Prayer to the fountain of Light and Truth, and by leisurely Advances come to the knowledge of them.

And therefore, for a Man to expect that at his first entrance upon Religion, the full Light of it should immediately flow in upon him, and think himself to be still in darkness if it does not; is a great mistake, and too often of very ill consequence.

To

Vol. II. To look too close upon such *dazling* Truths, as the *Trinity of Persons*, suppose, in the *unity of the Godhead*; the *Mystery of God Incarnate*; the manner of the *real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*; the nature of God's *eternal Decrees*, and his *Prescience*, the influence they have upon the *Will of Man*, and how his *liberty of Choice* is consistent with them, and the like; is enough to confound Men of the strongest Reason, and the clearest Heads, tho' long accustom'd to the nicest speculations: how much more, those that are but *Novices* in Religion, and their Thoughts chiefly taken up with Business and the affairs of the World? And 'tis but too usual, that such Men finding these Doctrines beyond their comprehension, and their Ideas very confus'd about them; they either fall into *Enthusiasm*, or *Infidelity*.

'Tis therefore highly advisable, that People would at all times be very modest in their Enquiries into Things of this exalted Nature, and not pry too near into the *Mysteries* of Christianity, but more especially when they first begin to apply themselves to the Study of Religion; and rather make it their
great

great Endeavour to be Masters of the Christian *Vertues* in the first place, and then God will by degrees enlighten their pure Minds with a *sufficient*, tho' not perfect Knowledge of the Christian *Theories*, ^{some of} which can never be *thoroughly* comprehended in this Life. Vol. II.

And those that are to Instruct others should by no means puzzle them with Things above their reach; but bring them on by degrees, from one useful Truth to another, 'till they are capable of some Information in the abstruser Doctrins of Christianity; and then to give it them, as they are able to receive it, according to the Practice of our Lord, and his great Apostle St. Paul.

Thus we are told, *Mark 4. 3.* That Jesus spake the word unto the People as they were able to hear it; and in *John 16. 12.* he tells his Apostles, I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. And *v. 25.* These Things have I spoken to you in Proverbs, or Parables, the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in Proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. As much as to say,

Vol. II. say, *The Veil* I am fain to put upon those bright Truths at present, which are too glorious for your Apprehension as yet; shall in time be taken off, and you shall have a full and clear Manifestation of them, and be enabled to receive it.

And St. Paul agreeably tells the *Corinthians*, That he could not speak to them as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto Babes in Christ. I have fed you with Milk, says he, and not with Meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it. And the Reason of this he gave before, Chap. 2. 14. Because the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discern'd. And therefore, 'till that Incapacity was remov'd, and their Judgment improv'd and rectify'd by other previous Discourses; he was fain to forbear communicating that Wisdom to them, which was not to be spoken but among those that were perfect, to whom only, as he expresses it in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, strong Meat belong'd, even those who by reason of use have their Senses, or Faculties, *Heb. 5. 14.* exercis'd to discern both Good and Evil,

to see Truth from Error, and to take Vol II.
things right. *Heb. 5. 14.*

And accordingly he tells *them*, as he had done the *Corinthians*, that he had *many things to tell them, and hard to be utter'd, since they were dull of hearing, inapprehensive, and incapable of such sublime Doctrines, and had rather need that one* — 11.
should teach them again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and were such as had need of Milk, and not of strong Meat, they were so unskilful — 12.
in the Word of Righteousness. And then, in the beginning of the 6th chap. having thus quickned them up to a better attention, and more diligent application of Mind for the future; and because, as he says verse 9. he was persuaded better things of many of them, than what he had before laid to the charge of some; he exhorts them, that leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and not always sluggishly resting there, they would go on to Perfection. — 13.

The *Romans* he cautions, *not to receive those that were weak in the Faith to doubtful Disputations. The Philippians* he exhorts to keep close to what they had already attain'd, and not to be uneasy, and envious at one another, and
L break

Vol. II. break Unity, because some excell'd others in Christian Knowledge, but to be still endeavouring after further improvement, and in time God would reveal to them what at present they were ignorant of. *Philipp. 3. 16, 17.*

Here is all along a due regard had to the *capacity* of those that were to be instructed, and the most *exalted* Doctrines were *sparingly* discours'd of, and that to those only that were of the greatest proficiency in Spiritual Knowledge; but nothing more *common* than exhortations to *Holiness*, and unblameableness of Life, as being indeed, of the greatest concern of all, and not above the meanest Understanding.

And this is what should have been better consider'd than it has been, by a sort of Preachers among us, who pretend to be mighty Lights in the midst of a dark World, and make it their chief business in their *popular Harangues*, to fill their Hearers heads with amusements in the most abstruse Points in Divinity, and strange perplexing Notions about *Predestination*, *absolute Reprobation*, and *Election* from all Eternity, without regard to any qualifications on our part, and such an account
of

of *Faith* as makes it quite another thing Vol. II. than the Scriptures represent it to be; and in the mean time cry down the good old way of inculcating the necessity of *good Works*, and *practical* Religion, as jejune, and flat, and formal, and almost heathenish, and far from the Spirit of the Gospel.

What has been the Consequence of this, we all know too well; namely, the rise of abundance of wild enthusiastick Opinions, crude, incoherent Interpretations of the Holy Writings, to the great decay of true saving Knowledge, the unspeakable Injury of that which is Christianity indeed, and which really gives but too much occasion to *those that are without* to ridicule and blaspheme it as they do. And whatever is pretended for this way of Preaching upon account of *Edification*, I'm sure it can never tend to what is truly so; and at this rate, like those mention'd by St. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 7. Men may be *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth*.

The very Heathens will teach us better management than this, the wisest of their Philosophers never admitting any to their Lectures about their

Vol. II. *sublimest Theories*, till they had purg'd their *Morals*, and run thro' a previous course of *strickt Discipline*, and such Instruction as might open their Minds by degrees, and make way for the free and full entrance of those Doctrines in which the perfection of their Philosophy consisted.

Wherefore, to draw to a conclusion of this Observation; our Lord's behaviour to this Blind-Man, when he restor'd his Sight to him, shews us what is the readiest way to Spiritual Illumination, or filling the Mind with the brightest notions of Religion, and the true saving Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and which the Guides of Souls should take and the People obediently submit to.

And first, after laying the necessary foundations of *Faith*, establishing in as plain Terms as can be thought of, the nature and necessity of our belief in God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, and the Doctrine of future *Rewards and Punishments* in another endless Life, after our Resurrection from the dead; then to proceed to rectify Men's *Morals*, by pressing the necessity of *Repentance from dead Works*,
and

and endeavouring to persuade them to Vol.II.
leave the infectious Conversation of
Men of ill Principles and lewd Lives,
as Jesus led the blind Man out, to a
good distance from the wicked, unbelieving
City of *Bethsaida*. And after
some Impressions made this way, and
such awakening Discourses as may incline
'em to *consider* and look about
them; then to advise them devoutly
to *look up to* God for his Assistance,
that he would lighten their Darkness,
remove their Ignorance, their unreasonable
Prejudices and excessive Love
of the World, which mightily clouds
the Mind, and hinders its clear perception
of the Things of God, and that
by the Guidance of his Blessed Spirit
he would lead them into all necessary
saving Truth.

When this is done, we may *go on to*
Perfection, as the Apostles Phrase is,
and instruct them in the higher Points
of our holy Faith; with respect always
to their *Capacities*, and with that Modesty
and Reverence that becomes us,
when we search into, and give Account
of the Secrets of the Kingdom:
By this means keeping back nothing
that is profitable for them, and by

Vol. II. gradual Advances declaring to them
the whole Counsel of God.

Act. 20.

20, 27.

This is the best Method that Spiritual Instructors can take to give their People true distinct Notions of Religion, and make them see clearly the Beauties and Wonders of the Gospel: and if the People will follow such Directions, and be content with this gradual Method, and not run on with too impatient haste; there is no Question, but by the Concurrence of their own Endeavours in diligent Study and Meditation, and frequent Acts of Devotion, which will bring down God's Blessing and Assistance, they will improve in the most useful Christian Knowledge, according to each ones Capacity, and in sufficient measure to answer all the ends of Revelation.

But, to *Begin* with nice Speculations, and go on in a course of mysterious abstruse Divinity, to the neglect of plainer and more useful Truths; is to begin at the wrong End, and proceed in a wrong Track, and will *cloud* the Understanding, and make strange Confusion in our Minds, but never brighten and clear 'em up into a distinct Apprehension of divine Things, and give
us

us a true and solid Judgment of Vol. II.
them.

And if to this we add, a cautious circumspection in our future intercourse in the World, and make it our *study to be quiet, and to do our own Business* in the station where God has plac'd us; as our Lord, when he had restor'd perfect Sight to the Blind-Man, *sent him away to his own House*, to mind the Affairs of his Calling, and his Family, which then he was able to look after, and take care of, but charg'd him not to go into that vile, ungrateful, infidel Town again, the ill Principles and Example of which, might soon destroy that Faith in Jesus which this Miracle had wrought in him: This will compleat, and secure all, and prevent the return of Spiritual Darkness upon us any more, and make us *meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints*, in perfect Light, and Glory, for ever and ever above. But to proceed.

Our Lord, we read, did not only forbid the Man whose Sight he had restor'd, to return into the Town of *Bethsaida*, out of which he led him to work that miraculous Cure upon him;

Vol. II. but he enjoy'd him not to *tell* what had been done to any of the Town, when he should happen to meet with them and be ask'd about it.

Now the reason of this was their obstinately rejecting him, and invincible prejudice against him, notwithstanding the particular kindness and regard he had shewn for *them*; in choosing three of his Apostles from thence, *John 1. 44.* Peter, and Andrew, and Philip, and working so many of his Miracles among them, thereby seeming to take more especial care of their Conversion. This hardened ungrateful Behaviour of theirs towards him he resented so highly, and not without the greatest reason, that he resolv'd to bestow no further care upon them, but leave them to themselves, and give them over as desperate, and deprive them of those means of Grace and Salvation, which they had so long enjoy'd to no purpose.

And accordingly, in *Matth. 11. 22.* &c. we find him *upbraiding the Cities wherein most of his mighty Works were done, because they continu'd inflexible, and repented not; Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty Works*

Works which were done in you, had been Vol. II.
done in Tyre and Sidon, places it seems
remarkable for Wickedness, they would
have repented long ago in Sackcloth
and Ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be
more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the
Day of Judgment than for you. And so
for Capernaum, the place of his most u-
sual residence, which had been bless'd
with his sacred Presence, his Heav-
enly Discourses, his beneficial Miracles,
more than any one place besides what-
ever; because all this would do no
good upon them, as High and Prospe-
rous as their Condition then was, he
told them the case should soon be sad-
ly alter'd; and thou Capernaum, says he,
which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be
brought down to Hell. For if the mighty
Works which have been done in thee, had
been done, even in Sodom itself, it would
have remained unto this Day. But I say
unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the
Land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment
than for thee.

These are terrible Words, and the more so for coming from the Mouth of the Meek, the merciful Jesus; and to whom the Father hath committed all Judgment; as to reward those that truly

Vol. II. truly believe in him, so to punish those that reject him, as they deserve. For the compassionate Saviour of the World to be so far incens'd, as to denounce such Woes as these; and for the great Judge of Quick and Dead to pass so dreadful a Sentence before Hand; shews how highly provoking it is to abuse his Mercy, and his wondrous Love, and obstinately to refuse that Salvation which he so kindly offers to us, upon such easy reasonable Terms, and has so 'dearly bought for us with his precious Blood.

And to assure us, that 'twill equally displease him, in all succeeding Ages of his Church, to have the Ministers of his Kingdom, and their Offers of Peace and Reconciliation to God thro' him, rejected, and that it shall be as severely punish'd; he gives this express Order to the seventy Disciples, who represented the future Clergy of the Church,

Lu. 10. 10.

and they receive ye not, go your ways out into the Streets of the same, and say, even the very Dust of your City which cleaveth

— 11.

on us do we wipe off as a Testimony against you, that the Kingdom of God hath come nigh unto you, and ye were invited but

refus'd to enter into it; But I say unto Vol. II.
you, it shall be more tollerable in that day — 12.
for Sodom, than for that City. And
 then he subjoins the Reason, *He that*
heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth
you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me: So — 16.
 that we see where it centers at last.

'Tis indeed, but too often seen, that
 those who enjoy the greatest Privileges,
 and have the happiest opportunities of
 advancing their eternal Interest, make
 the least use of them, *and turn the grace*
of God into Lasciviousness, as St. Jude
 expresses it, *denying* (and that not in Jude 4.
their Works only) *the only Lord God,*
and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord that
bought them; with Infidel, Atheistick
 Pride and Arrogance, and horrid Blas-
 phemy, making open opposition to Re-
 ligion, ridiculing all Things sacred,
 revelling in the Works of Darkness,
 and glorying in the shamefullest Pro-
 phaneness and Impiety, tho' surround-
 ed with the Light of the Gospel, shin-
 ing in its Purity and perfect Lustre.
 But we have seen what dreadful Woes
 are denounc'd against them that do
 so; and how they *bring upon themselves*
swift Destruction. 2 Pet. 2.1.

And

VOL. II.

And tho' their hellish Party may increase, as God knows it does too much, as was long since foretold by St. Peter; —2. and their Noise and their Numbers may keep one another in Countenance for a while; yet the same blessed Apostle assures us, *Their Judgment lingreth not, and their Damnation slumbreth not,* —3. is coming on apace, and will speedily overtake them to their eternal Shame and Confusion. For nothing is more certain than this, that the more Men enjoy of the means of Grace and Salvation, if they don't make suitable Improvement under them, much more if they abuse and reject them; the greater will be their Damnation, the more exquisite their Misery in the lowest Hell. For they obstinately refuse the Happiness that is offered them by Jesus Christ, and slight that Reconciliation to God through him, to which they have continual Invitations, and nothing wanting to incline them to embrace it. *And of what Punishment think we shall such Wretches be thought worthy!* And what Punishment can be thought too great!

Heb. 10.
39.

And if any People in the World have Reason seriously to consider this, and lay

lay it to Heart, we of this Church and Vol. II.
Nation have ; who seem to be peculiarly favour'd by God with every thing that is needful to make us truly Religious, and Wise, and Happy, and yet abound with Lewdness and Infidelity.

How plentiful and how excellent, is our instruction in the great Truths of the Gospel, and that in the right method which we describ'd but now? we are not puzzl'd and amus'd by our Teachers with dark, cloudy nothings, and unintelligible rants of Enthusiasm, and craz'd with looking into unfathomable Depths ; but the most useful Doctrines are chiefly insisted upon, such as will build us up in *Faith* and *Love* and good *Works*, make us like our blessed *Master* in *Temper* and in *Life*, and fit us for the pure Joys of Heaven when we dye. Such as will teach us to bear all the various changes of this present State, evenly, and with moderation ; to govern our Passions, to submit to Providence, to *know how to abound and how to suffer want, and in every condition therewith to be content*. Such as press *Honesty* upon us in all our intercourse with one another,
and

Vol. II. and *Charity* to all that are true Objects of it ; such as exhort us to pay reverence and obedience to our Superiors and Governours, and tend to the good of Society, to the establishment of Quietness and Peace both publick and private, to the *Terror of evil doers, and the Praise and Encouragement of those that do well.* Finally, such as give us true notions of God, and the nature of that *Worship and Duty* which we are to pay him, and which will be most acceptable to him ; and plainly lay before us the whole admirable proceeding of the *Redemption* of the World by Jesus Christ, and urge it home upon our Affections, that it may work in us that infinite Good for which it was design'd. Nor are the sublimest *Theories* of our holy Religion past by in silence ; but in proper times and places, and to such as are of capacity to apprehend Discourses of that nature, they are handled with that gravity and modesty and reverence, which such awful things require, and with the utmost clearness and perspicuity that such abstruse Doctrines will bear. So that, no *Light* is wanting to us, nothing that may inform the Understanding, and influ.

influence the Will, and move and warm Vol. II.
the Affections. Nothing that is *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for instruction in Righteousness*; so that 'tis our own fault if we are not *perfected in the Faith, and become Wise to Salvation, and thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*. And for the Truth of this, we dare appeal to all the World. ^{2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17.}

And in the quiet Enjoyment of so great, so inestimable a Blessing, we are secur'd by the civil Government; the excellent constitution of which, does very much conduce to the flourishing of Learning, and Religion and every thing that is Praise worthy, among us.

If this then, be our happy Case, let us seriously reflect, whether or no, we make the good use of it we should do; and if we don't, (as is but too notorious) let us bethink our selves before it is too late, and reform what is amiss, before God withdraws his abused Grace and Mercy from us, and abandons us, as utterly unworthy his further concern and regard, and removes our Candlestick out of its place because we love Darkness rather than Light, or, which is worse, make the Light that is

Vol. II. is in us to be Darkness, by prostituting our Reason and Knowledge, and our Religion too, to the Interest of our Lusts.

But let us remember the Fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, which were made
 2Pet. 2.6. terrible Examples to those that should afterwards live ungodly; and no longer abuse the goodness of God which is design'd to lead us to Repentance, lest his just Vengeance overtake us both here, and at the final dreadful Day of Judgment.

Wherefore, may we be so wise, as now in this our Day, to follow with a cheerful Obedience, the guidance of the Spirit of Truth and Holiness; as Lott did that of the Angel out of Sodom, and the Blind-Man that of our Saviour out of obstinate Bethsaida! so shall our
 Isaiab 58. Light break forth as the Morning, and
 8. our Age shall be clearer than the Noon Day;
 Job 11. and our departure from this Region of
 17. Darkness, shall let us into Light and Joy everlasting. Amen, blessed Jesus Amen!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
UPON OUR
Saviour's Miracles, &c.

V.

*A Man's Wither'd Hand
restor'd.*

LUKE vi. 6. &c.

And it came to pass also on another Sabbath day, that he entred into the Synagogue and Taught; and there was a Man whose right Hand was Withered.

And the Scribes and Pharisees watch'd him, whether he would Heal on the Sabbath day, that they might find an Accusation against him.

IN the beginning of this Chapter, we are told, That our Lord passing through some Fields of Corn on the
M Sab-

- Matt. 12.* Sabbath, his Disciples being Hungry,
 9. (as St. *Matt.* says) *pluck'd the ears of Corn and did eat, rubbing them between their hands.* Upon this, certain of the Pharisees, who, some or other of them, seldom fail'd to be with our Saviour, as Spys upon his Actions, and watching opportunities of Informing against him, Reprov'd them for doing that *which was not lawful to do on the Sabbath day.*
- v. —2.* But why was it not Lawful? There is nothing in the Law of *Moses* against the thing it self, but 'tis expressly allow'd;
- Deut. 23.* and as for its being done on the Sabbath
 25. day, How could the fourth Commandment be broken by plucking a few Ears of Corn, unless their hypocritical Zeal thought their rubbing them afterwards in their Hands to get the Grain out of the Ear the better, was a kind of Threshing, and too Laborious for that day of Rest. Or it may be it was upon account of a custom that then prevail'd among them, of not tasting any thing on the Sabbath till Morning Prayers were finish'd in the Synagogue; and so this Action of the Disciples, was a breach of the Tradition of their Fathers.

—3. However, Christ Excus'd his Disciples, by the Example of *David's* eating the

the *Shew-bread* to satisfy his own and his attendants Hunger, when nothing else could be had, which yet was plainly

1 Sam. 21. 6.
Levit. 24. 9.

Unlawful for any to eat of but the Priests alone; and if their Necessity could excuse them for the breach of a Positive Law, his Disciples Hunger might as well excuse them for the breach of a Custom only, which nothing had made binding, but Men's general Agreement in the Observation of it.

But besides this, he told them, that *the Son of Man was Lord also of the Sabbath*; intimating, that he had Power to dispense with the strict Observation of it as to bodily Rest, as he thought fit; and even to alter the Seventh for some other day of the Week if he so pleased, for the stated time of God's publick Worship; and which was in a few Years after, actually done by his Apostles, and his whole Church ever since.

Now, it came to pass, that on another Sabbath, probably the next, he entred into the Synagogue and Taught: and there was a Man whose right Hand was Withered, a poor Labouring Man, a Mason, as some of the Ancients tell us, who by that Misfortune, was rendred incap-

Vol. II. able of getting his Livelihood by his Trade, as formerly, and was become a great Object of Charity, and fain to be beholden to the Relief of others for his Maintenance. Upon this Man our Blessed Lord fixing his compassionate Eyes, and the Scribes and Pharisees that were there observing it, they thought that would be a good opportunity of knowing more of his Mind concerning the Sabbath, and as St. *Matthew* tells us, ask'd him, whether 'twas lawful to *Heal on the Sabbath day*? That so, if he had said any thing to the dishonour of that Holy day, *they might Accuse him*. And then they stood to watch and observe what he would say and do upon that occasion.

Matt. 12.
10.

Luke 6. 8. Upon this, our Lord knowing their wicked Thoughts and Designs upon him, call'd to the Man that had the Wither'd Hand, and said, *Rise up, stand forth in the Midst; and he arose and stood forth*. And then he answered the Pharisees question to him by another, and said unto them, *I will ask you one thing, Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do Evil, to save Life, or to destroy it?* And finding them all Silent (for no Answer could be given but what would
some

some way or other expose them to the Vol. II.
 People;) and the poor man being full of
 expectation of a Cure; *Looking round a-*
bout upon them all with Anger, being grieved
for the hardness of their hearts, He said unto Mar. 3. 5.
the Man, stretch forth thy hand, and he did
so, which before 'twas impossible for him
to do, it was so shrivel'd and shrunk
up and Lifeless; and his hand was resto-—10.
red whole as the other. And they were fil-—11.
led with madness, and communed one with
another what they might do to Jesus.

Another Relation we have, *Luke 13.*
 11. of a Woman that for eighteen Years
 had had a strange Infirmary, and was bow'd
 together, and could in no wise lift up her
 self. Her likewise Jesus Cur'd in one
 of their Synagogues on the Sabbath day,
 and made her strait; and when the
 Ruler of the Synagogue was angry at
 the People for coming on that day to be
 Heal'd Jesus rebuked him sharply, and
 said, *Thou Hypocrite, doth not each one of*
you on the Sabbath loose his Ox or his Ass
from the stall, and lead him away to water-
ing? And ought not this Woman, being a
Daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath
bound, lo, these eighteen Years, be loosed
from this Bond on the Sabbath day?

Luke 14.
1. &c.

And the same day, (probably) as he went to dine with one of the chief *Pharisees*, there was a Man lay d in his way that had the Dropſie, and he ask'd the Lawyers and Pharisees, as he had done before, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they still held their peace.* Then he took him and heal'd him, and let him go, and said unto them, *Which of you shall have an Aſs or an Ox fallen into a Pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things.*

Now our Lord upon all Occasions, by his Actions and his Discourses, endeavouring to bring the People off from the Superstitious Notions they had entertain'd of the Sabbath, and the bodily Rest that was so carefully to be observ'd upon it; and to convince them that nothing was more acceptable to God, nor more suitable to the Holiness of that day, than to imitate him in works of Mercy and Beneficence: 'Tis highly probable, his Aim and Design was to prepare them for that change which he knew would afterwards be made in his Church, (and very likely by his own direction) of the last for the *first* day of the Week, in remembrance

membrance of his Glorious Resurrection from the Dead, and make them more readily to comply with it, when their excessive Reverence for the *Seventh-day Sabbath*, was by this means something abated. But because the fourth Commandment in the Decalogue, seems to be inconsistent with such an Alteration, and causes many scruples in some well-meaning People's Minds, 'twill not be amiss to take this opportunity to set this Matter in as clear a Light as is consistent with the design'd Brevity of these Observations; referring the Reader for further satisfaction, to those that have written more largely upon this Subject.

Now as for the Fourth Commandment, from whence is deriv'd all the certain Obligation the Israelites had for keeping every *Seventh day* Holy, as a *Sabbath*, tor day of Rest to the Lord; (for as for the Practice of the Patriarchs in this Matter, tho' no doubt but they had set days appropriated to Publick Divine Worship, yet that it was every *Seventh day*, I think does no where sufficiently appear, much less precisely the Seventh from the Creation, the Memory of which very probably

See Mr.
Moret's
late Treatise upon
this Argument.

Vol. II. was lost till God was pleas'd to restore it, 16 *Exod.* 27.) As for the *Fourth Commandment*, I say there is a two-fold Reason given for the Observation of it. The one is in the close of the Commandment it self; namely, because God rested from the Works of the Creation on the Seventh day, and therefore Bless'd that day and *Hallowed* it, or set it apart for God's most holy Use; that his People might spend that day in Rest and Ease, and lay aside their Worldly Cares and Employments, and have leisure to Contemplate and Admire the stupendous Works of his Hands, and remember that he was the great Creator of all things, and form'd their first Ancestor *Adam*, out of the Dust of the Earth, and reflect that all things depend upon his Conservation and Support, who made them at first out of Nothing; and that consequently he alone is to be Serv'd, and Worshipp'd by them. And this was a very wise and effectual way to keep them from being Infected with the Idolatrous Errors of the Neighbouring Nations; namely, that the World was Eternal, and that the Sun and Moon, and Stars, were God's, and to be Adored by Mankind;

kind; and to secure them in the Wor- Vol. II.
ship of the only true God, who made
those Heavens and all that in them is.

The other reason for keeping the Sabbath we find, 5 *Deut.* 5. Where the People of *Israel* are reminded of their deliverance from the *Egyptian Bondage* thro' a Mighty Hand, and by a stretched out Arm, and then follows, *therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day.* That is, as they suffer'd a long and severe Servitude in *Egypt*, and were at length Miraculously deliver'd by God, and restor'd to Freedom, Ease and Rest, so they should set a-part the Seventh Day to Praise God for that his Wondrous Goodness, and cease from Labour, together with their whole Family, that their Servants might rest as well as they, and have leisure to Meditate upon God's great Mercies to them, and give him Praise and Thanks, and be instructed in his Holy Laws. And if, as the Learned Mr. *Mede* conjectures, it was in the dawning of the Seventh Day, that *Pharaoh* and his Army were Drown'd in the Red Sea; from that time they had most Reason to Date their Deliverance, and on that Day with grateful
Hearts

Lib. 1.

Disc. 15.

Vol. II. Hearts to call it to Remembrance and bless God for it.

Now this Latter Reason seems to be that for which the *Israelites* were first commanded to observe the Sabbath or Seventh Days Rest soon after the Destruction of *Pharaoh* and his Host; (and before which time we meet with no mention of it, unless by way of Anticipation, as in *Gen. 2. 3.*) And accordingly were forbidden to gather *Manna* on that Day, and Miraculously supply'd for two Days on the Sixth: And when afterwards it was in a more Solemn manner made a standing Law, and one of the Ten Commandments; then, the manner of observing it in a strict Bodily Rest from All Labour was particularly express'd, and the *First* Reason given for it, Namely, God's Resting on that Day from the Works of the Creation.

So that to preserve the Thankful Remembrance of their wonderful Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and to secure them from Idolatry by the frequent and constant return of a Day to be set a part for the Commemoration of the Worlds Creation by God, and for his Solemn Worship, as the only due Object of it, were the Reasons of the
Fourth

Fourth Commandment being given to Vol. II.
the Jews, and so strictly enjoinning every Seventh Days Rest, and so severely Punishing the Violaters of it : And consequently, 'tis plainly of a mix'd Nature, partly Moral, and partly Ceremonial and Political.

What is Moral in it consists in this, that there should be some stated time set apart, both for the private and publick Worship of God, wherein to Meditate upon his Works to Adore and Praise him for his Benefits, to study and be instructed in his Will ; and that such times should frequently return and be spent in such Holy Employments. And that this is highly fitting and reasonable, and will for ever be so, the Light of Nature will teach us. For what is more becoming rational Creatures, that have their Being from Almighty God, and are continually preserv'd and supported by his Providence, and have Faculties to know and attend to this, and are capable of making him some acknowledgment and return ; what more becoming such Creatures and on on all Accounts a Duty Incumbent up them, tho' there were no express Law to enjoin it, than for them to make use

Vol. II. use of those Faculties in Contemplating and Admiring the Transcendent Perfection of the Divine Nature, and his Wondrous Goodness, who gave Being to all things else, and preserves 'em in it by his Power and Providence, and pay him the most humble Adoration, and Praise and Magnify his Glorious Name.

And, since Time, is as necessary for such Performances, as Place, what more fitting than that some fix'd and stated Times should be set a part for this purpose, when Men may joyn in so reasonable an Act, and meet together to Bless and Worship their common Benefactor? And his Benefits being so innumerable, and so constantly conferr'd, what more agreeable to the best Reason, than that the Solemn returns of Men's Thankfulness for them, should be very frequent, and without long intervals repeated? And that, for more extraordinary Mercies, there be more particular and extraordinary Acknowledgments?

This, I think, is all that is Moral in the Fourth Commandment. For as for setting a part the Seventh Day for such Religious Uses, the reason of it, as we have

have seen, was not Natural, but either Vol. II. Political in remembrance of a National Deliverance upon that Day, or Ceremonial, as representing God's then resting from the Works of the Creation and our Correspondent Resting from the Labours of our Calling that we might the better Contemplate those Works of the Almighty, and Adore him for them. So that the *Duty* of that Day is Moral and bound upon us by the Law of Nature, but that the *Seventh Day* should be the precise, or more especial time of performing that Duty is not so, but has another kind of Obligation.

For I can't tell how to believe there is any thing of Morality in Numbers; and why Seven should in its own Nature be of greater Sanctity than Six or Nine, is hard to be understood. I know many of the Ancients and some of the Moderns, have been much addicted to this sort of Notions, and they have shewn a great deal of Wit and Phancy in Discoursing of 'em, but very little of certainty and Solid Truth.

And as for the strict Bodily Rest enjoyn'd upon those Hallow'd Days, 'tis Ceremonial likewise; the inward Piety and

Vol. II. and Devotion of the Mind, being the chief Business of times set a part for the more Solemn Worship of God. And tho' all secular Thoughts and Business should then be laid aside, and all Wise and Religious Governours have commanded it to be so, that Men's Minds may be free and undisturb'd, and the better able to perform their Religious Duties; yet so intire a Rest as the Jews were oblig'd to, (however proper for People of their Temper, and Typical of our Eternal Rest from all our Labours in Heaven) is so far from being in it self necessary to that end, that 'tis very little conducive, or rather a hindrance to it, it being a greater Burthen, and more Tiresome than Bodily Labour it self. And therefore our Lord made no scruple to break it as we have seen, when he had an opportunity offer'd him of doing Good and shewing Mercy, which is with God more acceptable than Sacrifice.

Now from what has been said of the Nature of the Fourth Commandment, that it is partly Moral, and partly Ceremonial and Political, we may learn how far we are oblig'd by it now under the Gospel; and in short, what is
Moral

Moral in it obliges us, but what is Ceremonial does not. The Moral part, is part of the Law of Nature, for 'tis founded upon the Intrinsic Reason of things, and therefore can never cease to oblige; but the Ceremonial is wholly Positive, and may be intirely laid aside, or alter'd, as Circumstances alter, or the Reason ceases for which it was enjoin'd.

Wherefore, it being now since the coming of Christ as fitting and reasonable, and indeed much more so than ever, that we should Worship our Great Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and that some time be set a part for this Worship, publick as well as private, and that those Solemn times should frequently return, and secular Cares and Employments be then laid aside, that we may without distraction attend upon the Services of Religion; We Christians are oblig'd so far to obey this Command as to observe such certain stated times for Religious Worship and to spend those Holy Days in the Offices of Piety and Charity, Adoreing and Praising God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the Places set a part for those purposes, studying his Laws, and begging

Vol. II. ging his forgiveness of our violation of them, and laying our Wants before him in humble fervent Prayer, and as we have opportunity in doing Good to one another. But that this Day of Religion should be the Seventh, or that we should cease from all manner of Work and Bodily Labour upon it, is wholly Ceremonial, and ceases now to oblige us as the Rest of the Jewish Ceremonies do: Our Lord having *Cancell'd the Hand-Writing of Ordinances that was against us*, which were but the shadow of what is now substantially compleated under the Gospel Dispensation, and must disappear in the presence of the Body, which is *Jesus Christ*, now manifested in the Flesh.

2 Coloss.
14. 16, 17.

Having thus plainly and briefly consider'd the Command of keeping the Seventh Day Holy, as it was given to the Jews, and how far it obliges us Christians; I shall now shew how the First Day of the Week came to be kept Holy by the Church of Christ instead of the Seventh, and the Moral part of the Fourth Commandment thereby observ'd.

As for any express Command of our Lord or his Apostles for the change of the

the Seventh Day of the Week for the Vol. II.
First, and making that the stated time
for the Christian publick Worship, 'tis
true we find none in Scripture; And
the Apostles Example and Practice, ap-
prov'd of by our Lord, as we shall see
presently, is all the Divine Authority
we have for it. And this was thought
sufficient by the Primitive Church,
which constantly kept that day Holy,
that they might not be behind-hand
with the Jews in the frequency of their
solemn times of Worship, Dedicating
one day in Seven to the peculiar Service
of God and their Saviour; only make-
ing that alteration in the choice of the
Day, and that for a very good Reason,
as we shall see by and by.

And this day is call'd, by St. *John*, *Rev.* 1.
the *Lord's day*; and by the Ancients,^{10.}
Sunday (however over-nice some now-
a-days may be) as being that day of
the Week which the Heathens Dedicat-
ed to the *Sun*, and therefore us'd by
the Fathers in the Apologies they then
made for the Christian Religion, as
best known to them by that Name:
But they never call'd it the *Sabbath*,
as being manifestly improper, tho' a
great many in these our Wiser days,
N feldom

Vol. II. seldom call it any thing else, and look upon it as a piece of Religion so to do.

In process of Time, when Princes became Christian, they expressly commanded that day to be kept Holy instead of the Jewish Sabbath, and shew'd great Zeal and Piety in the good Laws they made, concerning the due Observation of it. And so things have continu'd in the Church of Christ ever since.

Now, that the Apostles and first Christians did set the Example of Assembling together on the first day of the Week, to Worship God and their Saviour, is evident from several places of Scripture.

Thus in the 20th Chapter of St. John's Gospel, ver. 26. we are told that Eight days inclusively after our Lord's Resurrection, which was on the first day of the Week, his Disciples and others, were met together, and Jesus stood in the midst, and said *Peace be unto you*. And again, Acts 2. 1. we read, that *when the day of Pentecost, which was on the first day of the Week, was fully come, they were with one accord in one place,* and that upon a Religious account, no question;

—v. 19.

Luke 24.
33.

question; and our Lord shew'd, that Vol. II.
he approv'd their doing so, by sending
the Holy Ghost in so wonderful a man-
ner upon the Apostles at that time,
and giving so great a Blessing to St.
Peter's Preaching that day, that it con-
verted near *three Thousand Souls.* v. 41.

And *Acts 20. 7.* we are told, that
upon the first day of the week, when the Dis-
ciples came together to break Bread, that
is, to celebrate the Sacrament of the
Lord's-Supper, as most Interpreters un-
derstand it, *Paul preach'd to them;* which
is a plain intimation, that 'twas then
the Custom to meet on that day for
such Religious Purposes. And accord-
ingly, *1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.* St. Paul gives
this Direction concerning their Con-
tributions to their suffering Brethren;
As I have given order to the Churches of
Galatia, even so do ye; and the Order is
this, *Upon the first day of the Week, let*
every one of you lay by him in store, as God
hath prosper'd him (or deposit in the
hands of some Body that was appoint-
ed Receiver) that there be no Gatherings
when I come. And why was this to be
done on the First day of the Week ra-
ther than any other? but because then
was the General Assembly of the Faith-
ful,

Vol. II. ful, and so a larger Collection might be made.

And the practice of the Primitive Church was agreeable to this Apostolical Example ; as is too evident from Ecclesiastical History, and the Writings of the most Ancient Fathers, for any that have read those Writings to deny.

28 Matt.
1. i

Now the Reason why the First day of the Week was made the day of the Christians solemn Religious Assemblies, was because 'twas on that day that our Blessed Saviour, after he was Murther'd by the Jews, gloriously rose again from the Dead, return'd triumphantly from the Conquest of Death and Hell, and thereby verify'd his divine Mission from Above, more than by all his other Miracles ; and gave us unexceptionable assurance of Salvation through his Merits, and Obedience to his Laws, and likewise of our own Resurrection in due time, from Death to a happy and eternal Life with him in Heaven. 'Tis true, we find not *this* Reason, nor indeed *any* given in the Scripture, for keeping the First day of the Week Holy ; but in the Primitive Writings it is often done : And great things they spoke in Honour of that Sacred day,

day, and very careful they were to Sanctify and keep it Holy, as a day appropriated to the Exercises of Devotion, and a representation of the Heavenly Employment of the Souls of the Blessed above.

And therefore by how much the Redemption of a miserable condemn'd World of Sinners from Eternal Torments in Hell, is more Valuable than the first Creation of it; and as much as a Rescue from the slavery of Sin and the Devil, is to be preferr'd before a deliverance from even the most cruel Bondage upon Earth: So much greater Reason have we Christians to value that *Day*, and keep it Holy, on which these wondrous things were accomplished, than the Jews had to observe their Sabbath, on the day of God's ceasing from the Works of the Creation, and compleating their deliverance from the *Egyptian* Thralldom.

This then being the Reason of the First day of the Week being Hallowed, and set a-part for the more solemn performance of Christian Religious Worship, and a Reason infinitely sufficient; let us indeed keep it Holy, but yet without hampering our selves with super-

stitious Scruples, and making a kind of Jewish Sabbath of this Blessed day of our Lord.

The Spirit of Christianity is Generous and Free; and a Soul fill'd with Divine Love and Admiration of the Infinite goodness of God to the World through *Jesus Christ*, casteth out all slavish Fear and anxious Thought about the little Punctilio's and Appendages of Religion; and is too much taken up with Praise, and holy Joy, and Wonder, to be at leisure to make nice Enquiries into every little circumstance of Worship.

Wherefore instead of perplexing our selves with needless Scruples about Bodily Rest upon those Sacred days; let us take care of the Religion of our Minds, that that may be Sincere and Heartly; and then no doubt but our outward Behaviour will be as it should be likewise.

If we seriously employ our Thoughts upon Religious Subjects in private, such as the wondrous History, and happy Consequence of our Redemption, the Glories and Felicities of the World above, and the certainty of our being made partakers of them in God's good time,

time, if we Believe, and live as becomes Vol. II.
Christians here; and on the contrary,
the certainty of our being for ever Miserable, if we continue disobedient to the
Laws of our Great Redeemer; and to
our Meditations add suitable Devotions,
proceeding from a truly Pious Breast;
and when the Hours of Publick Worship
come, resort to the Courts of God's House
with Reverence and Godly Fear, and there
with unaffected Fervour joyn with the
Congregation of the Faithful in all the
sacred Offices of the Church, in Prayer
and Praise, and Eucharist, and diligent
awful Attention to the Word of God,
and then ruminate and reflect upon it,
laying it up in honest and good Hearts,
resolving to square our Lives and Actions
by that holy Rule: If we thus celebrate
this Christian Festival, we shall in the best
sense Sanctify and Hallow it, and do far
more Honour to it, and Advantage to
our selves, than by all the nice observances
of a Bodily Rest. For tho' all kinds
of Work should then be abstained from
unless the Works of Necessity and Mercy,
yet that is chiefly intended for the
better performance of this Spiritual
Employment; and that we be as industri-

Vol. II. duftrious in making provision for our Souls, on the first day of the Week as we are the fix days after for our Bodies, and feed 'em plentifully with that *Bread of Life, which whofo eateth of shall live for ever.*

And if Men will be so unnatural to their better part, as to deny it that wholsom Sufenance, that Heavenly Food, which the Church in great plenty provides for them, and invites them to partake of, and under pretence of resting from their Labours, spend that Holy day in Laziness and Idleness, in Sottishness and Intemperance, and Wickedness of all Sorts; it concerns those Officers and Magistrates, whose Business it is to regulate such Disorders, as they will answer it to God, at the Great day of Account, to oblige them by such Methods as our good Laws direct, to come to the House of God, and joyn with their Brethren in the publick Duties of that day.

And let such as do frequent the places of Divine Worship, and make a shew of keeping the Christian Lord's day Holy, see that they do it in Sincerity; for *be not deceiv'd, God is not mock'd, and whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.* He that sows an empty
ty

ty formal Religion, shall receive as little of Reward; he that draws near to God with his Body and his Lips, but permits his Heart to wander from him, is an Abomination to him, and not the Hearers but the doers of the Word shall be Justify'd. In vain will it be to name the Name of Christ, unless we depart from Iniquity: In vain to keep a day in remembrance of our Saviour's Resurrection, unless we likewise arise from the death of Sin, to a new and holy Life: And in vain, utterly in vain to trouble ourselves with a form of Godliness, unless we have the Power of it; for without real Holiness no Man shall see the Lord; and 'tis not Bodily Rest, but a ceasing from the works of Iniquity, that will procure us admission into God's Eternal Rest above, in his holy Mountain the Heavenly *Jerusalem*.

But those good Persons who truly Reverence God's Sanctuary, and keep the day of their Blessed Lord from polluting it, and perform the sacred Duties of it with a Spirit of true Devotion; these will God make *Joyful in his House of Prayer* they shall enjoy the ineffable Pleasures that spring from sincere

II. loV cere Religion, and *All their Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices shall be accepted upon his Altar,* And as a Great Good Man of our own Nation has declar'd to the World from his own Experience, 'No
 L. C. F. ' better way to Prosper in our honest
 Hale. ' Undertakings all the Week, than seriously and Conscientiously to keep
 ' the first day of it Holy.

Wherefore to conclude, The Sabbath as our Lord said, *was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath.* The stated times of God's more solemn Worship, are design'd for our Spiritual Benefit and Advantage, and will conduce very much to it if we please, and are not wanting to our selves; But 'twas not God's design we should rest in Formalities, and be enslav'd to the strict Letter of his positive Laws, now especially under the Gospel of his Son, but pay him a Rational and Manly Service: So that in a word or two, the best way to enjoy the full benefit of days set apart for Religious Duties, is to steer the middle Course between *Superstition* and *Prophaness*; neither to behave our selves like *Jews*, nor Irreligious *Libertines*, and always to prefer Mercy before Sacrifice, substantial Vertue, before outward Appearance.

pearnces, and the Religion of the Heart before all things: For the Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart. And what then is the hope of the Hypocrite!

II. 107

1 Sam. 16. 7.

Job. 27. 8.

I shall only Transcribe a few Lines out of our Book of Homilies, to shew, that what has been said is agreeable to the Doctrine of the Church of England, and then have done. In the beginning of the First part of the Sermon of the place and time of Prayer, we have these Words; 'Albeit this Commandment of God (meaning the Fourth) doth not bind Christian People so straitly to observe and keep the utter Ceremonies of the Sabbath day, as it was given to the Jews, as touching the forbearing Work and Labour in time of great Necessity, and as touching the precise keeping of the Seventh day after the manner of the Jews; for we keep now the First day, which is our Sunday, and make that our Sabbath, i. e. our day of Rest, in the Honour of our Saviour Christ, who as upon that day rose from Death, conquering the same most triumphantly: yet notwithstanding, whatsoever is found

Vol. II. ' found in the Commandment, apper-
' taining to the *Law of Nature*, as a
' thing most Godly, most Just, and
' needful for the setting forth of God's
' Glory, it ought to be retain'd and
' kept of all good Christian People.—

And so on to the End, which is very
well worth Perusing. So that we see
in what sense it is, that after the Reci-
tal of the Fourth Commandment in our
Publick Service, the People are to make
this short Prayer, *O Lord, encline our
Hearts to keep this Law.*

Practical

PRACTICAL OBREVATIONS

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

VI.

Our Saviour's Transfiguration.

MATT. xvii. 1, &c.

Jesus taketh Peter and James, and John his Brother, and bringeth them up into an high Mountain apart ; And was Transfigured before them, and his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light.

WHen the time of our Lord's last Sufferings began to approach, and in a few Months more would be fully come, he thought it needful to prepare

Vol. II. prepare his Disciples beforehand for so sad a Scene, and which would give so great a shock to their Faith, and the greater if it should Surprize them without some previous Notice of it.

Therefore he first asks them, *Matt. 10. 13. Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?* What Opinion have the People of me who take upon me thus publicly to Instruct them, and so freely and openly reprove their Rulers, and those that are of greatest Esteem among them, and work so many and great Miracles as no Man ever did before me?

To this they Answer, *Some say, that thou art John the Baptist risen again from the Dead, (as Herod, Chap. 14. 2.) Some say thou art Elias, and others Jeremias, or One of the Prophets come again into the World, as a Harbinger to prepare the way for the reception of the Great Messias; of whose Coming the whole People of the Jews were then in great Expectation,*

Upon this, he farther asks them,
 —15. what They thought of him; *But whom say ye that I am?* And Simon Peter, who generally was the Spokesman for the
 —16. rest, Answer'd and said, *Thou art the Son of the living God. Thou art infinitely Superior*

Superior to all the Prophets that ever were before thee; even that Great Messiah, that divine Son of the most High, of whom they Prophecy'd, and had the Honour to be as his Heralds, to proclaim to the World his Coming, that it might receive him as became so Great a Prince and Saviour, Acts 5. 31.

This noble Confession of his, our Lord was pleas'd highly to Approve and Commend; and said unto him, *Blessed art thou Simon, for Flesh and Blood hath not reveal'd it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* 'Tis not thy partial Affection to me as thy Master, that makes thee say so, nor has it been put into thy Head by the Report of others; But 'tis a just Conclusion thou hast drawn from the Mighty Works thou hast seen me do by the Power of God, in confirmation of my Doctrine: So that 'tis his Testimony concerning me, that hath caus'd this Faith in thee, upon which my Church shall be so firmly built, *that the Gates of Hell, all the Force and Cunning of the Devil and his wicked Instruments, shall not be able to prevail against it.* —17.

Having said this, He charg'd his Disciples, *that they should not talk of what* —20.
had

Vol. II. had then pass'd between them, nor tell any man that he was *Jesus the Christ*, as being not yet seasonable till all things the Prophets had foretold of him were accomplish'd in him; and then proceeds to the main thing he intended to bring in by these Introductory Questions, the giving them the true Notion of the *Messias*, and what those Prophecies of him were, which remain'd to be fulfill'd, and how that he must go unto *Jerusalem* and suffer many things of the *Elders*, and *Chief Priests*, and *Scribes*, and at last be kill'd, and be rais'd again the third day.

For the Apostles as well as the rest of the Jews, were strongly prepossess'd with the Notion of their *Messiah's* being a *Glorious Temporal Prince*, that should by his *Victorious Arms* deliver them from the *Roman Yoak*, and *Restore again the Scepter to Israel*; never imagining that he should conquer by his *Sufferings*, and raise a *Spiritual Kingdom* only, and that upon his own *Blood*.

And therefore we find *St. Peter*, when his Master talk'd at this Rate, took him aside, and began to reprove him, saying, *Far be it from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* He wondred to hear the great Redeemer of God's People Discourse

course of such uncomfortable things; Vol. II. and in the warmth of his Zeal and Affection, took the boldness to reprove him for such melancholly, and even unbecoming Thoughts; which were so inconsistent, as he suppos'd, with the glory of the Messias, and the great acts he was to do for their Nation, as well as with his own personal Happiness and Safety.

But this was so displeasing to the blessed Jesus, whose Mind was wholly bent upon finishing the Redemption of Mankind, for which he came into the World, and which could not be accomplish'd but by his Death, that it rais'd his indignation to an unusual height, to hear any thing that look'd like a dissuasive from it; and with a severe and angry Look, he turn'd short upon *Peter*, and give him this sharp Reply, (the same he once gave to the Devil when he tempted him) *get thee behind me Satan*, that like him would'st discourage me from going on with the great Work for which I am sent, and which, if I neglect, thou and all the World must be miserable, *for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* Thy Head's too
O full

VolII. full of worldly Pomp and Splendor, and the course that is taken here below by those that would attain to Empire and Dominion; not considering the far greater and nobler Design of God, in sending his Son to found a new *Spiritual* Kingdom, and whose ways in doing it are not like Mens Ways, and his Thoughts far different from their's.

So apt are even the best Men, those especially that are of a warm quick Temper, to be guilty sometimes of great mistakes, relating to the proceedings of Providence in some of the main disposals of it; so ready to *consult with Flesh and Blood*, and guide themselves by ~~the~~ rules of worldly Policy, and popular Notions and temporal Regards in any great turn of Affairs; concluding that such and such is God's *end* in it, and such and such must be the *means* to attain it. When all the while he is steering another course, and by quite contrary Methods, intends to bring something of a very different nature to pass; of which instances enough might be given from the History of our own and former Times.

And

And then, where are our Politicks? Vol. II.
and how *foolish* is the Wisdom of the
World in the sight of God? and how
highly *displeasing* too, when it enga-
ges us, as it often does, in running
Counter to his gracious Designs, for
our own and the publick Good.

A quiet sedateness of Mind therefore,
whereby we are ready to acquiesce in
all the Disposals of Providence, how-
ever strange and unaccountable, and
it may be *discouraging* they may seem
to us; taking care in the mean time of
our own Duty, and arming our selves
with Resolution to resist whatever at-
tempts may be made to withdraw us
from it: This in conclusion will be our
greatest Wisdom, and that which will
recommend us to God's peculiar Pro-
tection, amidst all the changes and re-
volutions of this Mortal Life.

In St. Peter's answer to our Lord,
when he mention'd his Sufferings and
Death, there is a remarkable mixture
of *Fear* and *Ambition*, together with a
tender Concern for his Master's *person-
al Safety*; which last, tho' very com-
mendable in itself, yet, as it was tim'd,
was more offensive to Christ than both
the rest, for the reason we mention'd
before.

Vol. II. If his *Master* was to meet with such cruel treatment, he could not but expect the like himself, and humane frailty naturally shrinks from Suffering. And if he, whom he believ'd to be the *Messias*, shou'd be so far prevail'd over by his Enemies as to be put to death by them, all the high-rais'd Expectations, which very probably he had, (as *Mar. 9. 34.* we are sure *James* and *John* had) of great things under him, when he should be settled in his Kingdom, would sink to nothing. For as for what he had said of his *Resurrection* the third Day, *That* they all took very little notice of as a thing of which they did not apprehend the meaning.

Mar. 9. 10.

But this proceeding from the common mistake, that every Body was then guilty of, that the *Messias* was to be a glorious temporal Prince and Deliverer, was the more easily pardonable; whereas, his using *kindness* to himself as an argument to incline him to avoid those Sufferings and that Death, which were so much for God's Glory, and the good of Mankind, was a motion so base and dishonourable, that with a generous indignation he abhorr'd and scorn'd it, and rebuk'd him that made it

it with the utmost sharpness, tho' but Vol. II.
just before he had given him the highest
Character and Commendation.

And we, in like manner should entertain with the utmost abhorrence any suggestions that would dissuade us from our Duty, and discourage us from doing what is highly to God's Honour, and beneficial to our Brethren, tho' suffering attends it, let those dissuaves be offer'd upon never so tender regards, and that by our nearest Relatives, and best and dearest Friends; as we find St. Paul did, when his Friends ^{Acts 20:} would have dissuaded him from going ^{13.} to Jerusalem: remembering what Jesus said to Peter after this cutting Rebuke, and to the rest of his Disciples, *if any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow* ^{Matt. 16.} ^{24.} *me, for that will be the best expression of his true kindness for me; and, with respect to our unmanly, as well as irreligious Fears, in suffering even Death itself for a good Cause, reflecting upon what he further said, v. 25. whosoever will save his Life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his Life for my sake shall find it again, with vast improvements, in Life Eternal.*

Vol. II. And as for any worldly Advantages we may propose to our selves by declining Suffering, and making undue compliances rather than lose great Hopes and Expectations; nothing can be a greater Folly and Vanity than this: *For what is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul, and what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? For the Son of Man, notwithstanding his Sufferings and Death, shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his Works; with a recompence infinitely exceeding all that this World can afford.*

Thus did Jesus prepare his Disciples against that melancholy time, which then drew on apace, and make provision against their fears, and enable them to bear those great disappointments of their temporal Hopes, which they would meet with e're long; by such excellent arguments, as if duly weigh'd and consider'd would be effectual: and will be of great use to *us* too, as well as *them*, when in like circumstances, and in danger of any Sufferings for Jesus and his Truth.

But

But because, their firm belief in him Vol. II.
as the *Messias*, was of the greatest importance, and in a little time would be in such danger of being shaken; he was pleas'd, in a few Days after this discourse with them, to give *Peter*, *James* and *John*, (who were the leading Disciples, and the usual Companions of his retirements) such a demonstration of it, as should admit of no objection, and render their Faith in this fundamental Article impregnable.

And the reason why *these* were made choice of upon this and the like occasions, rather than any of the rest of the Twelve; may be, the hearty Zeal, and Sincerity of *Peter* (which is always a Recommendation, to him who looks into the inmost recesses of our Souls, and values undissembled Honesty above all things) and the like good qualities in *James* and *John*, together with their near relation to him; which, where there is equal worth, or no great matter of difference, is always allow'd the preference. And besides, Jesus foreseeing, that St. *James* would be the first *Martyr* of the twelve, and St. *John* the last *survivor*; might think it most convenient to admit them to

Vol. II. the greatest intimacy with him, and clearest demonstration of his Divinity: That so the first of them might with the more courage and constancy attest it with his Blood, and the other for a long time bear witness of it, as more than once having seen and heard the Testimony concerning it of God himself. These three, were sufficient to report what should happen to the rest, and were of credit enough to gain their belief; whereas the presence of all of them, would have made it more publick than our Lord design'd it should be, who never in his retirements took with him more or less than *three*, if he took *any*, as upon no account being either too *many*, or too *few*.

With these attendants therefore, *he went up into an high Mountain* apart, and when he was there, as his custom was, he withdrew at some distance, (as all his Actions were perform'd with the greatest decency) and began his Devotions to his Heavenly Father. And, *as he pray'd*, with extraordinary Fervency, and most ardent Affection, (than which nothing does render us more like the Saints in Light) he was *transfigur'd*, or receiv'd a *celestial* Form; *and*

Luke 9.
29.

and the fashion of his Countenance was altered'd: His Face shone with a surprizing Splendor, *like as the Sun*, as if Rays of Glory Beam'd from it round about: ^{2.} His very Garments stream'd forth light and became *white and glistering*, as if cover'd with a Lambent Flame, like the Vision which Daniel saw, and St. John long after, in the Isle of Pathmos, ^{Dan. 10. 5.} of a Man cloath'd with Linnen, whose loins ^{Rev. 1. 13.} were girded with fine Gold of Uphaz, his Body sparkling like the Beryl, and his Face as the appearance of Lightning, and his Eyes as Lamps of Fire: He was all over like a glorious Seraph, flaming with Divine Love, and full of the Raptures of that Blisful Kingdom, from whence he came for our Salvation, and to which he designs to bring us in due Season.

Now, while Jesus was thus Employ'd and thus Transform'd, as if in Heav'n again; behold, two of the Noblest Inhabitants of those bright Regions, *Moses* and *Elias*, came to attend their Lord: the greatest Law-giver and the greatest Prophet that ever was vouchsaf'd the World, before the Son of God came down into it, and lively Types of him, in whom both the Law and the Prophets were fulfill'd. And they likewise appear'd

Vol. II. *appear'd in Glory* with their splendid Heavenly Bodies, such as those put on that are cloath'd upon with Immortality. And such shall be the Bodies that God will give good Men at the Resurrection of the Just, as far exceeding the most Beautiful Forms here below, as a bright Star does a clod of Clay. That which was sown in Corruption when we dy'd, shall then be rais'd again in Incorruption, and be made incapable of it for ever after. That's the first great Change, and the Foundation of the rest that follow: For when, by the Almighty Power of God, all those Principles of Corruption that us'd to adhere to our Body, and were of its Constitution, are left behind in the Grave, then that which was sown in Dishonour, in much Deformity perhaps to be sure in much Imperfection, shall be rais'd in Glory, made Lucid and Resplendent as Angels, use to appear to us in bright and shining Forms, full of Majestick Beauty. What was sown in Weakness, feeble and decay'd, and quite worn out with various Diseases, or with Old Age, as we call it (which yet consists of but a very few Years) or was dash'd in pieces by Violence, shall be rais'd in Power, become exceed-

exceeding Vigorous, Sprightly and Act- Vol. II,
ive, and for ever flourish in immortal Youth. For tho' it was sown a Natural or Animal Body, such as could not live and Act, without the sustenance of Meat and Drink, and which very Sustenance did frequently breed Matter for Distempers, and was the occasion of a more hasty Death, shall be rais'd a *Spiritual* Body, so far from ^{Rev. 17.} ^{16, 17.} *Needing*, as not to be susceptible of such gross Nourishment, and live for ever upon *Angels Food*, Contemplation, and Praise, and Love, and drink only of those *Rivers of Pleasure, that flow from* ^{psal. 16.} *God's Right-hand for Ever more. And as* ^{11.} *we have born*, here in this World, the *image of the first and Earthly Adam*, in ^{1 Cor. 15.} ^{49.} Sorrow, and Sicknes, and Death, so shall we then *Bear the Image of the second Heavenly Adam*, in perfect Health, and endless Happiness, and Joy, and Glory.

Then *Death*, the whole Dominion of it, all its Causes and Forerunners, and sad Effects, shall be swallow'd up in perfect *Victory*, and destroy'd for Ever; and so entire shall be the Conquest over it, that an Eternal Triumph shall follow in its room.

But

Vol. II. But as *there is one Glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, and another of the Stars,* some of those Cælestial Bodies exceeding others in their Light and Splendor; so after the Resurrection of the Dead, tho' all the Just shall shine like Stars, yet *one Star shall differ from another Star in Glory.*

Those that have burn'd brightest here in this first Life with the Fires of true Devotion and Heavenly Love, and abounded most in the works of pure and undefil'd Religion; their Lustre will be proportionably greater in the Kindom of their Heavenly Father above. And Prophets and Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors, Holy Bishops and Faithful Ministers of the Word of Reconciliation, shall have peculiar Coronets of Glory, as so many marks of Distinction and Honour conferr'd upon them by the great King of Heaven, according to their several Services and Stations here.

But above all in infinite Degrees, shall be the radiant Splendor of the Great *Sun of Righteousness*, sitting at the Right-hand of God, and filling Heaven with the Majesty of his incomparable Glory; surrounded with *Thrones, Principalities,*

ties, Dominions, and Powers, Angels and Vol. II.
 Arch-Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, Rev. 4. 8.
 continually crying aloud to him and his
 Eternal Father, and the Divine Spirit
 of them both, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord*
God Almighty, which was, and is, and is
to come! Casting their Crowns before the
Throne, and giving Glory and Honour and
Thanks, to him that sits on it, who creat-
ed all Things, and to the Lamb that was
slain, and redeem'd unto God by his
Blood Myriads out of every Kindred
and Tongue, and People and Nation,
and made them Kings and Priests unto
God, with whom they shall Reign for ever.
 All the blessed Company of Heaven,
 the most excellent of the whole intelli-
 gent Creation, joining in the rapturous
 Chorus, and saying, *Blessing, and Ho-*
nour, and Glory, and Power be unto him
that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the
Lamb for ever and ever, Amen!

—10.

5.—9.

—13.

These are glorious Things indeed,
 and such as make the greatest Glories
 of this World look like a shadow;
 dark and empty, and flitting, cold and
 heartless, and upon all accounts in com-
 parison contemptible.

But as glorious as they are, we our
 selves, we that are now poor misera-
 ble

Vol. II. ble Mortals, every one of us, however low at present, that is sincerely devoted to the Service of the great God thro' Jesus Christ, is design'd to be a happy sharer in them; and certainly shall be so, some in one degree, some in another, according to the measure of our Faith and Charity, and the Works of Evangelical Righteousness.

Now, can those that really believe all this, and have such charming Hopes, such enravishing Expectations, and so well grounded, that nothing can defeat 'em but themselves; can the heirs of such Bliss and Glory, and that know themselves to be so if they please, be so *abject*, so pittifully mean spirited, so even worse than Brutish, as to lie grovelling upon the Earth, and be best pleas'd to do so, and aspire to no greater Happiness than that can give them?

Where is our Religion, nay where is our Reason, where are our Thoughts, our Self-love, and our Ambition? Are all dead asleep as if under the power of some infernal Charm? Foolish Wretches, as we are, who hath thus bewitch'd us to doat upon Trifles and little fordid Nothings, and have no regard

to what will make us truly excellent and Vol. II.
even glorious, and infinitely Happy!
How foolish is this, and how ignorant,
and like the Beasts that perish!

But to proceed. — We are told *Lu.*
9. 31. that *Moses* and *Elias*, who thus
appear'd in Glory together with our
Lord discours'd with him of *his decease*
which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;
probably to encourage him the more
willingly to undergo those bitter Suf-
ferings which in a little time he was
to endure for Sinners, and from which
his humane Nature could not but
shrink and draw back, and be full of
dread at the thoughts of; by setting
before him the vast benefit that would
accrue thereby to miserable Mankind,
the Honour that would redound to his
heavenly Father, and the excellent
Reward that should be given to him-
self, the infinite Satisfaction his com-
passionate good Soul would afterwards
have in being the Saviour of a wretch-
ed condemn'd World, and making My-
riads of Souls happy for ever in Heaven,
which otherwise must have suffer'd the
most exquisite Torments for Ever, with
the Devil and his Angels: And for
which God would highly exalt him,
and

Vol. II. and give him a Name above every Name, that at the Blessed Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, and every Tongue of Men and Angels applaud his wondrous
 1 Phil. 9. Charity, and confess that Jesus Christ is
 10. Lord to the glory of God the Father.

For the Word which we translate
 *Eξodos. Decease, is of a larger signification than to express only his Death, and comprehends the whole circumstance of his leaving the World; that is, his Resurrection from the dead, and triumphant Ascension into the highest Heavens, from whence with great Mercy he descended for us Men, and for our Salvation.

So that this heavenly Conference of our Lord with Moses and Elias, was intended as a divine Cordial, to support his Spirits under his approaching Passion and tormenting shameful Death, and of which we find he had great need, when we read of his mighty Agony in the Garden in the Night he was apprehended, and that God thought fit to administer fresh Comfort to him by an Angel that he sent to strengthen him, when his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, and begg'd most earnestly of his Father, that if 'twas possible

possible he would remove from him Vol. II.
that dreaded Cup, and save him from
that dismal Hour: Which tho' he did
not do, yet he *supported* him under all
that he laid upon him.

Thus we see the happy effect of flying to God for help, in our Sorrows and Distresses, and the near approach of any great Tryal and Affliction, tho' God should not think fit to remove it from us.

'Twas when our Saviour was in fervent Prayer to God, under the sad apprehension of his bitter Sufferings, which then drew nigh, that his Heavenly Father sent *Moses* and *Elias* to minister Consolation to him by Arguments Divine, and infuse new vigour into his drooping Soul, by their cheering Presence and Discourse; and afterwards dispatch'd a glorious *Angel* to him from Heaven, to suggest such Thoughts to his amaz'd Spirit, as would carry him through all, with most exemplary Patience and Charity, Constancy and Courage.

For, as *Man*, our blessed Lord was subject to like Passions with us, had the same natural Aversion to Pain as we have, and needed the same Encouragements

P.

ments

Vol. II. ments to undergo it, and the same Comforts to support him under it; and when he most wanted those Encouragements, those Comforts and Supports, and with an humble submissive Importunity apply'd himself to God for them in Prayer, he obtain'd them: And if we take the like Methods, so shall we, whatever Tryals he shall please to exercise us with. And tho' neither *Moses* nor *Elias*, nor any of the Heavenly Host shall in visible glorious Forms appear to chase away, or mitigate at least our Fears and Sorrows; yet the *great Comforter* of All will not be wanting, tho' in an unseen way, to strengthen us mightily in the Inner-Man, and enable us to bear whatever the great Disposer of all things, shall in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, think fit to make our Portion.

The very *act* of fervent Prayer is a kind of *Transfiguration of the Soul*, it makes a mighty alteration in it for the better, gives it a heavenly Brightness and Serenity, raises and inspirits it with new Life and Vigour; disperses melancholy Clouds and Vapours, and in the chillest darkest Night of Affliction, makes us warm and lightsome *within*.

For

For then, *we have our conversation in* Vol. II. Heaven, and even with the blessed God himself in whose Presence is *fullness of Joy*. And how can such near approaches to the Throne of Grace, fail of transforming a truly devout Soul, into a heavenly Frame and Temper, fill it with exalted Thoughts and joyous Perceptions, and give such an inexpressible Turn to the Affections, as will raise it above itself, and far above the World, and all the low concernments of it; and give it such a ravishing View, and delicious Fore-taste of the Glory that shall hereafter be reveal'd to, and conferr'd upon it, as will work an unaccountable change in it, and make it look upon all its present momentary Troubles, as Light, and even nothing in comparison with those future Hopes.

How excellent therefore is the advice of St. James, *Is any among you afflicted? let him Pray!* 'Twas the course our blessed Lord we see, was pleas'd to take, in his great Sorrows, and 'twas attended with mighty Consolations and Supports; and he himself advis'd his Disciples to do as he did, *Watch and Pray*, says he, *that ye enter into Temptation,*

Vol. II. *tation*, and be overcome by it for want of Divine Assistance, which none that ask shall want. And what he said to them, he says to all in their sad Circumstances; and as they did so shall we, find the happy effects of it in Aid Commensurate to our greatest Tryals.

Let us therefore, with the Disciples, begg of the blessed Jesus to *teach us to*
 Lu. 11. 1. *Pray*; to put into our Minds by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit such good Desires as may be suitable to our several Exigencies, and to enable us to offer them up with great Devotion, and Faith, and Importunity, with Holy Hands, and a pure Heart, and evangelical Charity: in full assurance that a Prayer proceeding from such a righteous Soul will *avail much*, to the noblest Purposes that the most compassionate and generous Person can design for *others*, and the most *afflicted* Desire for himself.

Now while our Saviour was *Transfigur'd*, as we have hear'd, and in discourse with *Moses* and *Elias*, who likewise *appear'd in Glory*, *Peter* and they that
 Lu. 9. 32. *were with him were heavy with sleep*; ~~and~~ *tyr'd*, it may be, with their Journey,
 and

and it being *Night* too, as very likely it was, our Lord usually choosing that time of awful Silence for his devotional Retirements. But when they were *awak'd*, with that wonderful Brightness, probably that enlightned the Place, and shone round about them, and which the darkness of the Night made still more surprizing; with great astonishment *they saw his Glory, and the two Men that stood with him.* For if the glorious Appearance of Jesus to St. Paul, as he was going to *Damascus*, was even at *mid-day above the brightness of the Sun*, Act. 26. 13. how amazingly refulgent must such a Glory be in the midst of Darkness!

And 'twas this *surprize* and confusion of Mind that St. Peter was then in, which caus'd him to say, as he did, *Master it is good for us to be here, and let us make three Tabernacles, or Tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* For how could any Tabernacle that they could make, be suitable to such glorious Inhabitants? And how could he imagine, had his Thoughts been his own, that such as *they* could stand in need of such accommodation?

Vol. II. And yet, all his Care was for *them*, not for himself or his Companions, who rather needed shelter, from such an over-bearing flood of Glory. But his Reason as well as Sense, was dazled and benighted with too great a brightness, so that *he knew not what he said*.

But who can blame him for saying *it is good for us to be here!* Such heavenly Glory, made him think himself in the Regions of the Blessed above. And who *then*, but would be very unwilling to go down to the lower World any more; and say with great Delight Master, *it is good for us to be here!*

Now, if that which was but an imperfect Resemblance of the Cælestial State, did so mightily affect the great Apostle, what will *Heaven itself* be to a Holy Glorified Soul, made capable of its full distinct Enjoyment.

There, besides the transcendent Glory of the Place, the splendid Appearance, not only of the bright *Ministers* of that heavenly Kingdom, but of all its blessed Inhabitants; and which infinitely excels all other Glories, and from whence they are all deriv'd, the incomprehensible Glorious Majesty of God, and his Divine Son enthron'd at his

his right Hand : Besides all this, which Vol. II.
must needs be a most ravishing Sight
to every Pious Soul ; the admirable *Con-*
versation there will be extreamly de-
lightful.

Not only *Moses* and *Elias* shall con-
verse with us, but the best and wisest
of *Mankind* thro' all Ages of the World,
and the several Orders of the Holy *An-*
gels, and which is above all, the adore-
able and ever Blessed *Jesus* our dear Re-
deemer.

The Pleasure, the Satisfaction, the
Joy of such Society as this, how can
it be express'd ! where there is all
Goodness, all *Wisdom*, all *Love* and *En-*
dearment without dissimulation ! where
the Praises of the great, the good, the
eternally Blessed God, are continually re-
sounding and eccho'd from one Seraphick
Quire to another ; the wonders of the
Divine Providence re-counted, and the
Reasons of its disposals discover'd, dis-
cours'd of, and admir'd ; and above all,
the glorious and Mysterious Scene dis-
play'd of *God Incarnate*, suffering the
hardest Things, dying the cruellest
and most ignominious Death, to rescue
his rebellious Creatures from their just
Punishment, the most exquisite and

Vol. II. endless Misery! And then his succeeding Glories and Triumphs made the Theme of their Seraphick Hymns; all cordially rejoycing in each others Happiness, and all consenting in a full and most harmonious Chorus of *Blessing and Honour, and Glory, to the great Three-One, the inexhaustible Fountain of Being and of Happiness, whose Name only is excellent, and his Praise above Heaven and Earth!*

To make One in such a Blessed Company as this! To joyn in such a charming Concert! Oh! What shall I say! What shall I say, but with St. Peter, *Master, it is good for us to be here?* Here let us fix and settle irremovably; not make *Tabernacles*, but build *everlasting Mansions*, and never go down again to the Vally of the Shadow of Death!

For would all the Glories of this poor World, tempt us from the Enjoyment of such Bliss as this? And if so faint a glimpse of it as we have now seen, so dim, confus'd, and remote a Prospect of it as we can have here below, fills us with such Delight as we don't know how to express; what will the actual Enjoyment of it do! And what should we *not* do to attain to such Enjoyment!

-And

And how cold and indifferent, then Vol. II. should it make us to every thing besides! Nay what an *aversion* should it give us to those Worldly Vanities, which would deprive us of such Felicity, such Glory, such *everlasting* Glory and Felicity as this!

One Day in thy Courts is better than a thousand; I'd rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Ungodlyness. Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief!

Now, while St. Peter was under so great a Consternation as we have hear'd at the strange things he saw; Behold, a bright Cloud over-shadow'd them, and a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd, hear ye him.*

This glorious Testimony that God twice gave of his Divine Son, 1st. immediately after his *Baptism*, in the audience of a multitude of People, and now at his *Transfiguration*; could not but be a great confirmation of the Apostles Faith, and ought to be of ours too, who are assur'd of it by those that were *Eye-witnesses* of our Saviour's Majesty, and heard this Voice which came from Heaven when they were with him in the Holy Mount,

Mat. 3. 17.

2 Pet. 1.
16. &c.

Vol. II. Mount, where he receiv'd from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

And indeed this extraordinary occurrence, consider'd in all the circumstances of it, together with the exact completion of the Prophecies concerning the Messias, in our Lord Jesus; amounts to such Evidence of his being the great Redeemer of the World, and the Universal and last Law-giver that should ever be sent by God to reveal his Will to Mankind, and compleat all other Revelations, and to whom all must pay Obedience that hope for Salvation; that 'twill be unpardonable obstinacy to reject it.

This Jesus, is that great Prophet of whom Moses long since said, as St. Peter urg'd to the Jews, *Act. 3. 22. 23. A*
Dent. 18. Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up
15. 18. 19. unto you of your Brethren like unto me,
him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he
shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass
that every Soul which will not hear that
Prophet, shall be destroy'd from among the
People. And therefore, at his Transfiguration, to this is my beloved Son, was added

added *hear ye him*; and which, being Vol. II.
said in the presence of *Moses* and *Elias*,
gave him the manifest Preference to
them both, and thereby, to all the
Law and the Prophets that were before
him.

Moses indeed, was a great and glo-
rious Type of Christ in the *Meekness* of
his Disposition, and his great *Courage*
withal, and nobleness of Spirit; in his
being the Deliverer of God's People
from their Bondage in *Aegypt*, and work-
ing so many Miracles to attest the
Truth of his *own Mission*, and for *their*
Benefit; and likewise in his being forty
Days in the Mount, without Meat or
Drink, conversing with God, and re-
ceiving Laws from his Divine Mouth,
which he was to teach the Israelites,
and being as 'twere *Transfigur'd* there,
his Face *shining* so when he came down
that the People could not behold him:
In these and divers other Particulars
that might be mention'd, was *Moses* a
Type of Christ; but when the great
Antitype appear'd, the Type was imme-
diately to give Place to it, as the shad-
ow to the Substance.

Moses was faithful as a Servant in the Heb. 3. 3.
House of God, but Christ as a Son, invest- 5. 6.

ed

Vol. II. vested with full Authority over his own House; and therefore was counted worthy of more Glory than Moses, being appointed by his great Father the heir of all things, by whom he made the Worlds, who was the brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, not only Creating, but Upholding all things by the Word of his Power, far Superior to the most glorious Angels, who are but *Ministring Spirits*, waiting about the Throne of God, to know and execute his Pleasure; whereas Jesus is set down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high, and all the Angels oblig'd to Worship him, and whose Throne, like that of God, is for ever and ever, and a Sceptre of Righteousness the Sceptre of his Kingdom: As the Apostle to the Hebrews magnificently Discourses.

Heb. 1.

If the Mosaick Dispensation then, tho' but the ministration of Death, in comparison with that Life and Immortality which is brought to Light by the Gospel, was so glorious that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the Face of Moses, for the glory of his Countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit, in the Kingdom of Christ, be rather Glorious?

For

For that which was made Glorious as a preparatory Institution only, had no Glory when the ministration of Righteousness took place, which was design'd to succeed it, by reason of the Glory that excelleth. For if that which was done away was Glorious, much more Glorious is that which remaineth, and shall remain for ever. As St. Paul excellently argues, in the third Chapter of his second Epistle to the Corinthians.

And this might be the reason of the difference between the Cloud out of which the Voice came, that said, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. and those in which God us'd to come down when he was pleas'd to converse with Moses; for they were black, and dark, and fill'd with Thunder and Lightning, and struck a mighty Terror into the People, which shews the obscurity and severity of that Dispensation: But the Cloud that gently overshadow'd our Lord, was bright and lucid, as fitly representing the Grace and Truth that came by Jesus Christ, the Mercy and the Clearness, the Light and the Comfort of the Gospel.

But

Vol. II. But notwithstanding the *Brightness* of the Cloud, when *Peter* and the two *Sons of Zebedee* were over-shaddow'd by it, and began to enter into it, we are told *they fell on their Faces, and were sore afraid.*

For, the suddain appearance of a *Cloud*, as descending from above, was always look'd upon as sign of the *Divine Presence* in a more especial and peculiar manner, of which there are abundant instances in Scripture; and therefore, no wonder if an extraordinary dread and amazement seiz'd them, especially when they heard God's Voice, saying audibly *this is my beloved Son*, &c, as it us'd to do the Holyest Men, and greatest Prophets before them.

For the best Man living, is not without great degrees of *Sin* and *Guilt*, which must needs make him full of Fear, and Anxious Dread, when the *Holy God* approaches; as our common Ancestor was after his Fall, who hid himself from the presence of the Lord, that is, endeavour'd to do so, *When he heard his Voice in the Garden.*

But see the happy difference between this Life and the next! That which

is so Dreadful to us here, and seizes us Vol. II.
with Fear and Trembling inexpressible, is the very thing that in Heaven will make us infinitely Happy, and fill us with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory, even the sight and presence, and intimate enjoyment of God!

For then our *Guilt* will be taken away, and our *Fears* vanish together with it; then shall we *see God as He is*, John 3. 2. and in that ravishing sight shall consist our Life and our Bliss, whereas here, *no Man can see his Face and live.* But Ex. 33. 20, then we shall *see Him face to face*, and 1 Cor. 13. 12. *know even as we are known*; and the more we see and know him, the more shall we love and admire him, and endeavour to be more and more *like him*, and be *chang'd into the same Image from Glory to Glory*, from one Degree of Holiness and Bliss to another, and a greater still to All Eternity.

What a Dismal alteration then, does *Sin* make in us! Causing us to dread and fly from the Presence of the Most Excellent Being, and our greatest Friend, and the Fountain of all our Happiness! And how Happy and Glorious a Change will follow upon our departure from this State of Iniquity
and

Vol. II. and Guilt, if we *Dye in the Lord*, in the Faith and Obedience of Christ.

How gladly therefore, should every Pious Soul welcome the good News of his approaching Dissolution, which will bring him to the endless Embraces of his God and Saviour? And how little reason have we to be fond of our Condition here below, in which we are *incapable* of our chief Good, and must *Dye*, and leave all things here behind us, before we can enjoy it!

Now, when this Glorious Scene was over, and *Moses* and *Elias* were returned to their blessed Abodes; *Jesus came and touched his amaz'd Disciples*, as the Angel did *Daniel*, when he appear'd to him, and said, *Arise, be not affraid; and when they had lifted up their Eyes*, which till then were clos'd with Fear, *they saw no man save Jesus only. And as they came down from the Mountain, Jesus charged them saying, tell no man what ye have seen till the Son of Man be risen again from the Dead.* For then, the relation of this extraordinary Vision would gain the more ready Belief; and this, and all the other wondrous Passages of his *Life and Death*, and *Resurrection*, put together, would so corroborate

Dan. 10.
10.

borate the Evidence of his being the *Vol. II.*
Christ, the Saviour of the World, as to
 any impartial Person would put it be-
 yond all doubt.

Since therefore, we have such abun-
 dant assurance, that *there is no Salvati- Act. 4. 12.*
on in any other, nor any other Name under
Heaven whereby we can be sav'd, but that
of Jesus; we ought, as the Apostle to the
Hebrews infers, to give the more earnest
heed to the things that we have hear'd, lest
at any time we should let them slip. For if
the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, in
the time of the old Law, and every
Transgression and Disobedience receiv'd a
just Recompence of Reward; how shall we
escape if we neglect so great Salvation,
which at first began to be spoken by the
Son of God himself, our Lord, and was
confirm'd by those that hear'd him. God
bearing Witness both to him and them, Heb. 2. 1.
with Signs and Wonders, and divers Mi- &c.
racles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost!

Take heed, therefore, Brethren, lest
 there be in any of you an evil Heart of Un- *Heb. 3. 12.*
 belief, and any of you be hardned thro' the *— 13.*
 deceitfulness of Sin. That ye be not sloth- *6. — 12.*
 ful, but followers of them, who thro' Faith
 and Patience inherit the Promises. For yet a *10. — 37.*
 little while, and he that shall come, will

Q

come,

Vol. II. *come, and will not tarry; and when he who
is our Life shall appear, we also shall appear
Colos. 3. 4. with him in Glory.*

*Collect for
6. Sunday
after Epi-
phany.*

‘ And thou, O Blessed God, whose
‘ Divine Son was manifested, that he
‘ might destroy the Works of the Devil,
‘ and make us the Sons of God, and heirs
‘ of eternal Life; grant us we beseech
‘ thee, that having this Hope, we may
‘ purify our selves even as he is Pure;
‘ that when he shall appear again with
‘ Power and great Glory, we may be
‘ made like unto him in his Eternal, and
‘ Glorious Kingdom: Where with thee,
‘ O Father, and thee O Holy Ghost,
‘ he liveth and reigneth ever one God
‘ World without end. *Amen!*

Practical

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ^{Vol. II.}

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

VII.

*A Woman brought before our
Saviour that was taken in
Adultery.*

JOHN 8, 3, 4, 5.

*The Scribes and Pharisees brought unto
Jesus a Woman taken in Adultery, and
when they had set her in the midst,*

*They say unto him, Master, this Woman
was taken in Adultery in the very Act.*

*Now Moses in the Law commanded us that
such should be ston'd; but what sayest
thou?*

IT was now the Feast of Tabernacles,
or that solemn Time of Rejoicing

Vol. II. for the space of seven Days, which God had appointed to be kept for ever in the seventh Month, when the Fruits of the Earth were safely gathered in. *Levit. 23. Numb. 29.* And he commanded that *Eucharistical Sacrifices* should be offer'd every Day, of *Bullocks* and *Rams*, and *Lambs*, together with *Flour* mingled with *Oyl*, and a *Kid* of the *Goats* for a *Sin-Offering* (besides the usual daily *Sacrifices* and *Offerings*;) the former as a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of their great Benefactor, *who openeth his Hand, and filleth all things living, with Plenty,* and upon whose Providence the whole Creation depends for its Support; and the latter, as an humble Confession of their abuse of that Plenty to luxury and excess, and a deprecation of the Punishment that such Wickedness deserves.

And this gives us a fair intimation what is *our* Duty in the like case, what God expects from us *now*, the reason of the thing being the same, tho' there is no express Institution of this nature in the Gospel; and which, we shall be most unworthy Wretches, if we neglect to perform. Not only publick Rejoycing but publick *Thanksgiving*, should close the

the glad Time of a seasonable and plentiful *Harvest*; and *free-will Offerings* in the Gospel way, that is, a liberal Charity to the Poor and Needy, should shew the inward Gratitude of our Souls, for so great a Blessing, and will prove a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. And if, as there is but too much occasion, we bring a *Sin-Offering* too, a broken contrite Heart for our manifold Abuses of the good Things God hath formerly given us, in Riot and Intemperance, and form sincere Resolutions of making a more Sober and Religious Use of them for the future; 'twill be as acceptable a Return as we can make to our munificent Benefactor, and will secure the continuance of his Bounty to us.

And tho' there is no peculiar Time appointed, nor form of Devotion prepar'd in our Church upon so truly joyful an Occasion (as I could wish there was, and is no more than is highly decorous and fitting) yet we may every one supply that defect in our own Minds, by suitable Ejaculations at the time of publick Worship, added in proper Places to the usual Service; which will find their way to the Throne of

Vol. II. God, and no doubt meet with a very gracious Reception.

The manner of the Jews keeping this solemn Festival, we find, *Levit.* 23. 40. where they are commanded to take on the first Day *Boughs of goodly Trees*, (by which is meant as we read *Nehem.* 8. 15. the *Olive*, the *Pine*, and the *Myrtle*, and as some think the *Pome Citron* with the Fruit hanging on them) and the *Branches of Palm-Trees*, and the *Boughs of thick Trees*, and *Willows of the Brook*; and after they had carry'd them for a while in their Hands in a kind of processional Triumph, they were to make Booths of them, in which they were to dwell the seven Days of the Feast; from whence 'twas call'd the Feast of *Tabernacles*.

Now the reason of this is given, *v.* 43. *That their Generation might know, that God made the Children of Israel, to dwell in Booths or Tents, when he brought them out of the Land of Egypt.* That is, to bring to their Remembrance the wonderful Support they had from God Almighty, in their forty Years wandering to and fro in a barren Wilderness, destitute of every thing that was needful to sustain Life, and yet, such vast
num-

numbers of them wanted for nothing, Vol. II.
but when they provok'd God to Anger by their Wickedness.

And as for the choice of those sort of Trees before all others, *Olives, and Pines, and Palms, and Myrtles*, they were wont always to be us'd in triumphal Solemnities, and made to signify Prosperity and Joy. But why the *Willows of the Brook* were added to them I cannot say, unless it was to signify the quick growth and increase of that People in their Numbers and their Wealth, as those Trees shoot strangely when planted by the Water-side, or to answer to the *Sin-Offering*, which they were to add to their Eucharistical Sacrifices, the *Willow* usually signifying Sorrow and dejection of Mind; of which, as I observ'd before, there was to be a mixture in their rejoycings at that Feast. And if so, it shews how significant the least ~~thing~~ ^{type} was that God was pleas'd to enjoin, and should induce us to conclude, that in other instances, of which it may be we don't know how to give an account, so wise a Law-giver would not expressly forbid or command any thing without good Reason.

Vol. II. Now the last Day of this Feast, which was the great Day of all, there was extraordinary Rejoyceing, with Musick and Singing and Dancing, in which the whole Night was spent, and abundance of People, both Men and Women of all sorts met together in the Court of the Temple, and employ'd more in Jollity than Devotion: That which was at first design'd for a *Holy Convocation*, degenerating into prophane Revelling and loose Mirth, (as is too common still upon the like occasions) and very probably, concluding in filthy lewdness, to which, in that Age, the Jews were extreemly addict-ed, as the gravest of their own Authors confess.

Levit. 23.
36.

The next Morning early, after this jovial Night, which the Holy Jesus spent in Devotion in the Mount of Olives; he came again into the Temple, and all the People came unto him, and he sat down and taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a Woman taken in Adultery in the very Act, which as some not improbably Conjecture, she impiously and impudently committed in some part of the Temple the Night before, and for which, the re-
velling

John. 8.1.

velling Doings there, might give too Vol. II.
much opportunity and temptation.

The Woman, 'tis likely was first brought before the *Sanhedrim*, or great Council, who were to judge of such Matters; and they, thinking it might be a good opportunity to intrap our Saviour, and draw him in to do something that he could not justify, and might make matter of Accusation a-^{verse 6.}gainst him, sent her by some of their Members to Jesus, as by way of enquiry what should be done with her, there being, as they pretended, some difficulty in the Case, in which they desir'd his Opinion.

They tell him, *that Moses in the Law commanded that such should be ston'd*, referring to what is said, *Deut. 22. 23. 24.* whereby we learn that this Woman was *be- troth'd*, but not marry'd, (for then she should have been not *ston'd* but *strangl'd*, ^{Levit. 20. 10.} which kind of Death the Jews understood to be meant when the Sentence was of being *put to Death* in general, not mentioning the manner how) which makes her Crime much greater than if she was a Virgin disengag'd to any Man, and so the Law judg'd it to be, *v. 28, 29.* it shewing a more impatient

Vol. II. tient and ungovern'd Lust, and being a great Wrong to her intended Husband, and such as might prove of the worst consequences to his Family. And 'twas done with her full consent too, for she was taken *in the very Act*, without any sign of resistance, otherwise they could not say that the Law adjudg'd her to be Ston'd; for it expressly order'd, and with the greatest Reason, that those that were *forc'd* should have nothing at all done to them. So that there was all the aggravation that could be in this Womans Wickedness, and she justly deserv'd to die.

V. 25. 26.

V. 24.

But the Man that debauch'd her having made his escape, (as we may suppose he had, by their not bringing *him* to our Lord together with the Woman, whereas both of them in that Case were adjudg'd by the Law to the same Punishment) there was some difficulty in the matter, and a doubt might be rais'd whether the *Woman* alone should be presently Ston'd, or kept Prisoner till the *Man* could be apprehended and suffer with her; and if in some competent time he could not be found, whether or no she should be executed without him. Or the doubt might be, whether

ther they could justify it to their Ro- Vol. II.
man Governours, who, as 'tis generally
thought from *John* 18. 31. had taken
from them the power of inflicting *capital*
Punishments, at least as by their
own Authority, without first having
recourse to *them* as their supreme Lords.
Or it may be, as several of their Au-
thors confess, they durst not make use
of such Power if they had it, for fear
of raising the *Mobb* upon them; Wick-
edness of all sorts being then grown to
that highth, and so almost universally
committed, that the offenders were too
many to be Punish'd, at least with any
severity, and brav'd it out against all
Law and Justice.

Such scruples and difficulties as these,
they might possibly pretend to our Sa-
viour in this Case; when yet, so scan-
dalous a piece of Wickedness should by
no means go unpunish'd. And since
he took upon him the Office of a Pro-
phet in teaching the People Lessons of
extraordinary Purity and Holyness,
and inveigh'd so sharply against Vice,
not sparing those of the highest Rank
that were guilty of it; they brought
this Case before him, supposing that
one way or other, it would certainly
ensnare

Vol. II. ensnare him. If he condemn'd the Woman to die, then they would have inform'd the Roman Governours against him; as usurping that Power which they had thought fit to take into their own Hands, and accus'd him as a Man Seditious and Turbulent, of dangerous Principles, inconsistent with the publick Tranquility. And very likely they would have set the *Rabble* upon him too, as too severe a controul-er of their Vices, and who, if suffer'd to go on that rate, no Sinner could be safe; which would have been a very prevailing Argument with the common People, who were then so extreamly Wicked, as we said before, to have got together against him, and pull'd him in pieces.

But on the contrary, if he had directly acquitted her, then they'd have accus'd him to the *Sanhedrim* as one that oppos'd the Law of *Moses*, and cry'd out upon him as a licentious Heretick, an encourager of Lewdness and Debauchery, notwithstanding his pretence to extraordinary Sanctity, and a lover of that Vice himself, which he was so ready to excuse in others.

And

And indeed, which way soever he had determin'd the Case, it being a matter not barely speculative, but belonging to the Courts of Justice, as an open violation of one of their establish'd Laws; they would have accus'd him as a meddling busy Body in that which did not concern him, being only a private Person; one that encroach'd upon publick Authority, and thereby betray'd his aspiring ambitious Designs, which ought to have an early check, before they proceeded too far. And to what a length they would have carry'd an Accusation of that nature, we may guess from what followed not long after in the Story of their malicious Prosecution of him upon the slightest grounds imaginable, which ended in his bitter Sufferings and Death.

But our blessed Master, who was exceeding *Wise* as well as *Innocent*, was well aware of their treacherous base Designs upon him, and at first gave them no answer; but in a thoughtful Way, as if musing upon something else, stoop'd down from the place where he sat, and with his Finger wrote upon the Pavement, making
ind of Characters upon the Dust.

some k

The

Vol.II. The People in the mean time that stood round about him, and had heard what the Scribes and Pharisees were saying to him, were full of Expectation what would be his answer in a Case of that nature; and the Scribes and Pharisees, thinking they had put him to a plunge, and brought him to a streight which he could not tell how to get out of, were resolv'd to push it on as far as they could, and *contin'd asking him his Opinion, and urging him to give them an answer.* When he, calmly *lifted up himself, and said unto them* (that is, the Scribes and Pharisees who had brought the Adulteress before him,) *he that is without Sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her, as the Law of Moses directs the accusers to do.*

The Wisdom of which Answer was very great: For by it, he avoided the Snare they laid for him, in engaging him in judicial Matters which did not belong to him, and for which, as was said, they would have accus'd him either to the *Roman* or the *Jewish* Governours, or it may be to both; and likewise cut off all occasion for the imputation of his conniving at, and excusing Lewdness and Lust; and with all de-
fects

ected the vile Hypocrisy of those great Vol. II.
pretenders to Holyness: Who *being convicted by their own Conscience*, at so home and unexpected an Answer, which was spoken too with an unusual Majesty and Authority, and pierc'd them to the quick; and made sensible in a surprising manner of their guilt, it may be in that very instance wherein they accus'd the Woman, or in something else as bad; while he again stoop'd down in the same musing Posture as before, they took the opportunity (which 'tis like he kindly gave them on purpose, knowing what confusion they were in, and being loath to expose them too much because they *sat in Moses seat*) and sneak'd away one by one, *beginning at the Eldest even to the last* and glad they came off so.

So good was our blessed Master even to these worst of Wretches; so unwilling to let the People see too much of the blushes and Self-Condernation, and guilty Silence, and Shame, of those that were their Rulers and religious Guides and Instructors: which would have been so very remarkable, had they stay'd longer in the presence of Jesus, (who they found could discover the filthiness of their Hearts, and
most

Vol. II. most secret Wickednesses,) that it would have been to their eternal Reproach, and it may be made use of to the reproach of Religion itself, when it was known to make so little impression upon the Minds of its most zealous Professors, and whose business it was to teach it to others, and earnestly recommend the practice of it.

And this should teach us, not to be too ready to lay open the miscarriages and vices of Magistrates and Ministers, not to make the most of any opportunity we meet with of blazoning their Wickedness abroad, and setting it out in the worst Colours and utmost Aggravation; but consider the interest of Religion and of Government, and not give the Enemies of both so much occasion to Blaspheme.

'Tis not amiss indeed, for Men that are vile in such Stations to be in some measure made sensible that the World takes notice of it, and despises them for it, because *Shame* oftentimes does more towards a Reformation, than the best Arguments that can be us'd; but when they are expos'd *too far*, 'tis apt to harden them in their Wickedness, and make 'em carry it off with a higher Hand,
and

and a desperate kind of Impudence, and Vol. II.
haughty Scorn of the censure of all
the World: and then, there will be
no hopes left of their amendment.

For, when Shame has no retreat,
nothing to hide and cover it, it turns
into Rage and Fury, and an utter dis-
regard of Reputation, as being then to
no purpose; whereas, if a Man thinks
that the worst is not yet known, and
'tis not as yet too late to regain that
good Name, which tho' under some
Disgrace, is not yet quite lost; it may
put him upon such Reflections as in
time will make a happy alteration in
his Conduct. But Reproof and Shame,
that exasperate too much, are like chur-
lish Phylick that works too violently,
and does more harm than good.

Now, *when Jesus had again lift up
himself, and saw none but the Woman,*
those that brought her to him with so
much seeming Zeal, having made use
of the opportunity he gave them of
dropping away one after another,
which they might easily do without be-
ing much taken notice of in such a
Croud as was then got together; he
said to the guilty Wretch, *Woman, where
are thine accusers, hath no man condemn'd*

R

thee?

Vol. II. *thee?* Has none of those grave sancti-
 sanctify'd Persons so clear a Conscience
 as to venture to adjudge thee to that
 Punishment which thy Crime deserves,
 and begin to inflict it upon thee; for
 fear of the Reflections of his own Mind
 that he deserves as bad? She said *no*
man Lord; and Jesus said unto her, nei-
ther do I condemn thee, or pass that Sen-
 tence on thee, which the Law has al-
 ready done, it being none of my Bu-
 siness to be a temporal Ruler, or a
 Judge. But let me warn thee, as thou
 would'st escape the infinitely more
 dreadful Sentence of Death, ^{eternal} at the fi-
 nal Day of Judgment, go and Repent
 and *Sin no more*; no more repeat that
 Wickedness for which God will surely
 punish thee, tho' Man should not, un-
 less thou art truly Penitent for thy
 Fault, and dost commit the like no
 more for ever.

Now by this gentle dealing of our
 Lord with this lewd Woman, (which
 was but agreeable to the design of his
 coming into the World, which as him-
 self tells us, was not to destroy but
 to save, not to condemn but to
 reform Mankind) he was so far
 from conniving at that Sin of which she
 was

guilty, (as some would Prophane-ly in-Vol. II. sinuate) and giving a favourable Judgment of it; that he allows it to deserve that Death which *Moses* adjudg'd the Offender to, by bidding any one of her accusers that was not guilty of the like Crime, or one as great, to throw the first Stone at her: And then, with an awful reprimand he bids the Woman go and sin no more. Which, tho' he did not take upon him to pass a judicial Sentence upon her, (as indeed it did not belong to him in his private capacity to do) yet plainly shew'd what his Thoughts were of the guilt and demerit of the action.

But he has more expressly told us his Opinion in this Matter, in many places of the Gospel. As particularly in what he says, *Mat. 23. 27, 28. Ye have hear'd that it has been said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery, by which the Jews thought they were only restrained from the outward act of defileing their Neighbour's Wife; and by allowing themselves in Polygamy, and making too light of Fornication, and very seldom putting the Laws in execution against the Sins of the Flesh, they became in that respect as wicked*

Vol. II. as any People under Heaven: But, says the Holy Jesus, *I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, in an unlawful way, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* Here is a restraint put upon our very desires, and inmost motions and affections of our Souls; and the Man that entertains a lew'd lustful *Thought*, is declar'd to be an adulterer in the sight of God.

And to keep us at the farthest distance from any actual Impurity, he charges us, *if thy right Eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out, and cast it from thee;* that is, guard your selves against the least lascivious Glance, and severely chastise your selves when you transgress that way. *If our right Hand cause us to offend,* then he commands us to *cut it off and cast it from us,* not to indulge our selves in any looser dalliances, or the least immodest Touch that may enkindle the vile Flame of Lust; and when we have gone too far this way to punish our rebellious Flesh by such Discipline as will, for the future mortify inordinate Affection; and this as we would escape the endless Pains of Hell.

In

In the matter of *Divorce*, which in Vol. II. that Nation was come to a strange Pitch of wantonness and humour, and for which every the least dislike and fanciful *Whim* was look'd upon as Cause sufficient; so that indeed, 'twas no better than a Cloke to cover, with a little decency, their vagrant Lust; in this case, our holy Master confines it to the Cause of *Fornication* only, or *Adultery*, (as those Words are often promiscuously us'd in Scripture) and expressly declares that whoever shall put away his Wife for any other reason, and shall Marry another *committeth Adultery*, and *causeth her* likewise to *commit Adultery* if she Marries again, before his Death, as he also does to whomsoever she is Marry'd. Mat. 5. 32. 19.—9.

Now, was every Purity and Chastity carry'd to so great a heighth as by our blessed Master, and such care taken to secure it in the *Root*, and pluck up every filthy Weed that would over-run and choak it? And don't his Apostles Gal. 5. 19. 20. 21. likewise utterly forbid all manner of Heb. 13. 4. obscenity, in *Thought* and *Word*, as well Colos. 3. 5, 6, 7, 8. as *Act*, under the severest penalty of Jude 7. being shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, and doom'd to everlasting Burnings?

Vol. II. So little reason is there for the Prophane Reflection of Atheistical Men upon our Blessed Lord, and his Holy Religion, from his Lenity to this Adulteress, in saying to her, *neither do I condemn thee*; as if he wink'd at her Fault, or rather did not look upon it as such, and could not heartily reprove her for it. We see how far 'tis otherwise, how perfectly pure and spotless Jesus was, and his Religion is, and what terrible Punishments shall at last be inflicted by him upon all the workers of Iniquity, when the time is come of his Judging the World in Righteousness, and giving to every Man according to his Works. And then, the impious Malice of those Enemies to all true Goodness, that are so ready to catch at the least occasions how unreasonable soever, to ridicule Religion, and slander the Foot-steps of God's anointed, the Christ, the Saviour of the World; shall be remembred against them, and receive its due recompence of reward.

How much better will it become us, and turn to much better account, to admire the wise mixture of Mercy and Justice in our Saviour's dealing with Offend-

Offenders, and make it matter of our Vol. II.
imitation !

Our Blessed Lord was himself without Sin, and hated it with a perfect hatred, and yet, had so compassionate a Sense of our Infirmities, and Weakness and the strength of our Temptations, as to be always ready to make the most favourable interpretation of our Actions, and give some allowance for Faults that had humane frailty at the bottom ; and who knows but there might be in this Woman's Case some alleviating circumstances which our Lord might not be ignorant of, such as surprize and importunity, besides the temptation of the time, being Night, and the jollity of that Festival, which might make her a more easie Prey, to such as then made it their business to deceive.

Why then should we guilty Wretches be so severe to one another, as we too often are ? Why should we not rather, *if a Man be overtaken in a Fault,* do as the Apostle excellently advises, and endeavour to *restore him in the Spirit of meekness, considering our selves lest we also be tempted ?*

Vol. II. Methinks, had we so due, so feeling a Sense as we ought of our own failures and infirmities, and worse, God knows, much worse, and the great need we have of the Compassion, and Mercy, and forbearance both of God and Man towards us; we should not be so ready to accuse and condemn one another, and aggravate those Faults to the utmost height, which from a Person of a benign Temper, and that considers what humane Nature is, would meet with much pity, and with some excuse.

This one would think, but yet 'tis generally much otherwise; the *guilty* being glad to make others as bad as *they* are: Whereas, those that are the most innocent and good themselves, are, like God, and Jesus, the most kind and favourable to others that transgress, unless it be out of *malicious Wick- edness*; the most ready to extenuate a Fault, and treat the Offender with a commiserating tenderness and meekness of Wisdom, provided the Fault is not of a *devillish* Nature, and he that commits it of a *devillish* Disposition.

For

For then, the Case is alter'd; and Vol. II. we can't too severely reprehend the Sins of Hypocrisy, and Pride, and Revenge, and Cruelty and Falshood, Envy and Malice and Spite, and the like; nor can the greatest Charity in the World know what excuse to make for those that are guilty of them. And accordingly the most Compassionate Jesus, who knew, and was most ready to pity our Infirmities, and pass as favourable a Sentence on us for them as was possible; yet had another notion of those *spiritual* Wickednesses, and denounc'd Woe upon Woe, with all the resentment that could be against the Scribes and Pharisees, the rottenness of whose Hearts he saw, and their great guilt in those worst of instances, thro' the demure appearance of extraordinary Sanctity, which they put on to delude the World.

Therefore, says the Apostle, of *some* Jud. 23. *have Compassion, making a difference, and* 24. *others save by fear, if possible snatching them out of Fire, be the manner never so rough and displeasing; and rescuing them from the Misery they are hastening to, tho' it be by the most terrifying and*
awaking

Vol. II. awaking Methods, which alone are useful to such Men as they !

This is the Duty of *all*, according to their several opportunities, abilities, and stations; but more especially of the Ministers of Religion, the guides of Souls, the Pastors and Governours of the Flock of Christ. They should imitate their great Master in lenity to the Sinner, as well as hatred to the Sin; and by all mild gentle ways of Persuasion endeavour to reduce those Sheep that go astray in the Paths of Vice and Error, 'till they become obstinate, stubborn and untractable, and grow mischievous to the rest of the Flock, and then, another course is to be taken: That is, such as may detect them, and their wicked Purposes, and shame and affright them into a bitter sense of things, and better Practices for the future, and if possible, make 'em of *Wolves*, into which they had degenerated, become harmless Sheep again. And 'tis a happy and a kind severity, that will work so good an effect as that.

But suppose those Spiritual Persons, or those Magistrates that are to Reprove and Punish Vice in others, are vicious themselves, and it may be known

known to be so; and like the Scribes Vol. II. and Pharisees that brought the Adulteress to our Saviour, and accused her, are as bad or worse: With how ill a Grace, you'll say, and to how little purpose will they Reprehend and Chastise those Crimes which themselves do daily commit, and for which their own Consciences at the same time fly in their Faces?

All this is very true; but what then? Must none animadvert upon the faults of others, but those that are guiltless themselves? I doubt at that rate Government would soon be at an end, and the Sword of Justice would be born in vain.

Indeed, it should put Ministers and Governours in mind of being exceeding circumspect over their own Conversation, that they may execute their Office with a becoming Boldness and Authority; which none can do so well as those that lead an unblameable Life themselves, and need not be put to the Blush, and stand in fear of Reflections upon their own ill Behaviour, when they Rebuke and Correct what is Criminal in other Men. And accordingly we find the People very attentive to
our

Vol. II. our Saviour's Preaching, and they thought no Man spake as he spake; his spotless Life gave force to his Doctrine, and made him teach *with authority, not as the Scribes*, whose personal Wickedness made what they said contemptible.

And withal it should remind Men in publick Stations, whether of Church or State, of that smart Passage, *Rom. 2. v. 3. 21, 22, 23. Thinkest thou this, O Man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that preachest a Man should not steal, dost thou steal; Thou that say'st a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery; Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?* There is such a natural *Indecorum* in this, such a trifling with, and abuse of God and Religion, of Laws and Government, and exposes all to so much Contempt, that 'tis inexcuseable; and he must be an extream ill Man indeed, and very unworthy of any publick Trust, that will not seriously consider it, and walk
with

with all possible Circumspection and Vol. II.
watchful Care. That so, no Man may have any evil thing to say of him, much less to *Despise* him and his Function and Authority, and retort upon him, *Why dost thou blame and punish that in me, which thou allowest in thy self?* Which to a Man of any Conscience, must cause the greatest Shame and Confusion in the World.

But after all, should Magistrates and Ministers of Religion not be so Wise and so Good as they should be, yet Government must be maintain'd, and Religion must be taught, and Vice must be reprov'd and punish'd; and the People are bound to be obedient and teachable, and endeavour to amend those Faults they are rebuk'd and punish'd for, tho' those that rebuke and punish them, are not without fault themselves.

And accordingly when our Lord at another time, had too much occasion given him to take notice *even publickly before the People*, of the great wickedness of the Jewish Rulers and Teachers, that bore the greatest sway among them; he yet takes care to give them this excellent Advice, *what they bid you observe*, as those that are empowered

Vol. II. powered to declare God's Will to you, and execute his Laws, *that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not*: Thereby preserving the Reverence that was due to their Authority, and at the same time warning the People not to be infected with their vile Example.

This is as it should be, in such a shameful Case, but blessed be God, that Case is as little *Ours* as of any People in the World: I'm sure the less the better upon all Accounts, and I hope we shall daily see it less and less; and if we have any Prudence, and Goodness, and even any Modesty in us, it will be so.

There is one thing more to be observ'd in this remarkable Passage, and that is, the suddain and strong *Conviction* of the Scribes and Pharisees Consciences, (which by their other behaviour we may believe were not over tender and impressible) when our Lord said to them, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

This was very mild in the expression, but very piercing in the meaning; and they took it as it was meant, and were too conscious of their guilt to bear
up

up against it: Tho' at another time, or Vol. II. from another Person, 'tis likely it would have signify'd but little, and some evasion or other they would have found to avoid the force of it.

But such a home Rebuke, from so Holy a Person as Jesus, before a concourse of attentive People, who knew their Character and their Practices well enough; and this, early in the Morning (as it was) when their Heads were cool and their Reason awake, and in *that* very Morning too, which follow'd a Night of Revelling and Lewdness, in which, 'tis very probable they had too great a share: This caus'd such a conviction as could not be resisted nor reply'd to; and they thought it their best way to slip thro' the crowd as silently and with as little Observation as they could.

Now from hence we may observe, the mighty force of a well-tim'd reproof from one that has Authority to give it, and when it meets with fresh *recent* Guilt; how irresistible the conviction is that it causes, which like a torrent, for a while bears all down before it; and there is no Sinner but one time or other, and it may be often, is sensible of
of

Vol. II. of such Convictions, which are a kind of Self-condemnation, an inward tacit Consent to the vileness of their Sin, and the demerit of it, and an acknowledgment of the Disgrace and Punishment they deserve for committing it.

Some Men are so profligately Wicked, that they despise all Laws of God and Man, and break thro' all the restraints that are laid upon them in the violent prosecution of their Lusts; and laugh at the threatnings and fears of future Punishments in another World, and go on at this Infidel Brutish Rate for many Years.

But still, there is a Law within them, written upon their Hearts by the Finger of their great Creator, which one time or other they will be forc'd to attend to, and which will shew 'em their guilt, and fix it home upon them; and Conscience, which is God's Vice-gerent in the Soul, when rous'd by some awakening accident, some moveing well-apply'd Discourse, or seasonable Reproof, or Pain and Sickness, or Affliction, will then do its Office impartially, and become both Witness, Judge, and Executioner.

And

And would they but suffer this con- Vol. II.
viction to remain long enough upon
their Minds, and with an honest good
Intention back it with suitable Refle-
ctions; considering, that if their own
Hearts thus condemn and punish them,
what must they expect from the infi-
nitely Holy and Just, and highly offend-
ed God, *who is greater than their Hearts,*
and knoweth all things! This, by the as-
sistance of the good Spirit of God,
which is never wanting in such a case
as this; would improve *Conviction* in-
to *Conversion*, and work a thorough
cure.

For, to be *convicted* in our *Conscien-*
ces, and *renew'd in the Spirit of our*
Minds, are two very different things;
Conviction to *Conversion*, being like *Fear*
and *Sorrow* to *Repentance*, apt to pro-
duce it but not the thing itself. And
tho' a Sinner can't be converted from
the evil of his ways, and become a
heartly Penitent, without being first con-
vinc'd that his ways are evil and de-
structive, and if not left, will bring
him to the sad portion of Devils; yet
a Man that has been convinc'd of all
this, and put into some fear and trou-
ble by it for a while, may shake off all
S again

Vol. II. again, and be as bad, and it may be worse than ever.

Of this, alas! we have daily very deplorable instances *now*; and the Scribes and Pharisees were remarkably so in our Saviour's time. They had *conviction* enough in their own Consciences of their exceeding vileness, and had they made a good use of it might have been exemplary happy *Converts*, and prov'd glorious Instruments in converting others; but they turn'd all into Rage and Malice and Revenge, against that excellent Person who had let such light into their foul benighted Minds, and invited them to make the best use of it, by saying, *v. 12. I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*: And instead of rejoicing in that Light, and improving the happy opportunity, and *cleansing themselves by it from all their filthiness both of flesh and spirit*, made what haste they could to put it out; and the filthy continu'd filthy still, and from the worst of Men proceeded Incarnate Devils, persecuting their kind Reprover with the most rankled Spite, and Implacability, till they had his Blood.

'Tis

'Tis plain then, that bare *Conviction* Vol. II. is not enough in order to a Sinner's Reformation, unless he joins his own sincere endeavours to it ; and he that continues in his Wickedness after his Conscience has been convinc'd of the guilt of it, aggravates his Sin to a much greater heighth, and from thenceforth becomes utterly inexcusable.

As 'tis the Duty therefore of the guides of Souls, to make it their business by all proper Methods, to cause such convictions in the Consciences of those committed to their charge, and as there is occasion to exhort, and reprove, and rebuke *with all Authority*; and which Authority of theirs will be much more revered and regarded, and effectual to the great ends for which it was conferr'd upon them, if it be attended with true Piety and Goodness: So the People, when such Convictions are wrought in them, should humbly and thankfully receive them, as an inestimable Blessing, and an argument of God's great Mercy to them ; and immediately apply themselves with an honest hearty diligence, to *amend* what they are convinc'd is so exceeding sinful, and if wilfully persisted in will be

Vol. II. of most fatal consequence. For how can those Men's Ruin be prevented to whom Conviction upon Conviction will be of no avail, tho' never so often repeated, because they wilfully shut their Eyes, and harden their Hearts against it? What but a *Miracle* of Mercy can save such Men as these; and how infinitely undeserving are they, and almost *incapable* of it? When Men are come to such a *reprobate Mind* as this, God gives them over to it, and leaves them to themselves, *to receive that recompence of their error which is meet.*

Rom. 28.
27.

Wherefore, to draw to a conclusion; let us humbly beg of God in whose Hands are the Hearts of all Men, and he only can turn them whithersoever he pleases; that he would press home, and make durable by his Grace those *Convictions*, which any of us are instrumental in working upon the Minds of others, or receive our selves! That none of us that name the Name of Christ, and have the Honour and Happiness of being Members of that glorious Head, may any longer *walk in the vanity of our mind, being alienated from the life of God, and as past feeling giving our selves over to lasciviousness to work*

Ephes. 4.
17, &c.

work all uncleanness with greediness, for Vol. II.
we have not so learn'd Christ. But let us
always endeavour to be followers, or imi-
tators of God, as dear children, and walk
in love as Christ hath loved us. Shunning
all impure Flames with the utmost de-
testation and aversion, and not suffer-
ing Fornication, or any Uncleanness to be
once named among us as becometh Saints.
Remembring that no unclean Person
hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of
Christ and of God.

Vol. II. PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

VIII.

*Zaccheus converted by our
Blessed Saviour.*

LUKE 19. 2, 3, &c.

*There was a man nam'd Zaccheus, which
was the chief among the Publicans, and
he was rich.**And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and
could not for the press because he was lit-
tle of stature, &c.*

OUR blessed Lord, was now going
from Galilee to Jerusalem to cele-
brate the last Passover he should live to
see; and at which he himself, as a
Lamb

Lamb without Spot or Blemish, should Vol. II.
be offer'd up for the Sins of the whole
World, to divert God's Vengeance
from the guilty race of Mankind.

And as he pass'd through *Jericho*, with
a great train of Attendants, and which
were increas'd by those of that Neigh-
bourhood who wanted to see this great
Prophet that but just before had re-
stor'd Sight to a blind Man that cry'd
after him for Mercy, by only saying to
him *receive thy Sight*; the rejoicings of
the transported Man and the loud accla-
mations of the People, reach'd the Ears
of *Zaccheus* a rich Publican of the first
rank, and excited in *him* also a great curi-
osity, (and it prov'd a *happy* one to *him*) to
see that wondrous Person of whom he
had often heard such amazing things,
and particularly that he had cur'd the
blind Beggar that us'd to sit by the
High-way side, who no doubt was well
known to him, by only a Word or two
speaking. And because the croud was
so great about Jesus that he could not
get thro' it to him, and he was of such
low Stature that he could not expect to
have a sight of him unless he was rais'd
somewhere above the throng; he hastens
to a *Sycamore-Tree* by which our Lord

Ch. 18. 32.

Vol. II. was to pass, and got up into it, by that means hoping to have a full view of him.

Now the employment of the chief of the Publicans was to receive of the Collectors the Tribute laid upon the Jews by the Roman Emperour, and return it into his Exchequer; and some of the richest of them, of which *Zaccheus* was one, *farm'd* it at a certain rate, and then miserably *squeez'd* and oppress'd the People by undue Impositions, and upon the least failure inform'd against them, and too often beyond what the Truth would bear, and then procur'd heavy Penalties to be laid upon them, of which, no question, they had a good share themselves. And by these vile methods, which made them extremely odious, they rais'd great Estates; and living thus in the continual practice of Extortion and Oppression were look'd upon as the worst of Sinners, and even as bad as Heathens (tho' most of them were Jews, as *Zaccheus* and *St. Matthew* were, whose employment, as the manner of their Conversion was much alike) and their Conversation was Scandalous, and avoid-
ed

ed as such, and *Heathens and Publicans*, Vol. II. *Publicans and Sinners*, are often coupled together in the Gospel as equally detestable; and 'twas made a great reflection upon our Lord that he had too much acquaintance with them, and shew'd them too much Countenance.

But his merciful Design in coming into this wretched World being *to seek and to save that which was lost* (as he was pleas'd to say upon this and the like occasions) *and not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance; For the Whole have no need of a Physitian but those that are Sick; and there is more Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just Persons that need no Repentance:* This being our Blessed Saviour's compassionate Design, he acted accordingly; and where there was any hopes, as there was more he saw in *Publicans and Harlots* than in *Scribes and Pharisees*, he took the most condescending winning Methods to reclaim them.

The *Scribes and Pharisees*, Men of devillish Tempers, he rebuk'd as he did *Satan*, with the most cutting Expressions, that shew'd his great abhorrence

Vol. II. rence of them and their hardned Obstinacy, and vile Hypocrisie; but to others he shew'd the tenderest Pity, and with the utmost Sweetness and Candour invited them to a Reformation. He saw, as his fore-runner St. John Baptist did, that nothing but *Terror* would awaken the one, and that *kindness* was the best method with the other; and the compassionate Way, having better tempers to deal with, was by much the most successful and very seldom fail'd; Witness St. Matthew, and Mary Magdalene, and Zaccheus whose Case we are now considering.

And the reason was, as I hinted before, because these had some Probity and good Nature in them, tho' their Vices were very great; but the Scribes and Pharisees had as great, if not greater Vices, and withal were full of hellish cunning, and spiritual Pride, and implacable Malice, and extream Selfishness, but had nothing at all of Sincerity and Truth; which made them incapable of a Cure but by the severest Methods that could be us'd, and those but seldom to any purpose. In so dreadful a condition are they, that want a good Disposition and Sincerity; there

there being so very little hope, notwithstanding the fairest Pretences, of their ever having such a feeling Sense of Religion, as will do them any real service in order to their Salvation. Vol. II.

But *Zaccheus*, tho' a Publican, our Lord, the searcher of Hearts knew to be well inclin'd; and therefore, when he came near the Tree where he was, he on purpose *look'd up and saw him*; and with a kind freedom, as if he had been his old familiar Friend, together with some powerful Glance, which mightily affected him (as another did St. Peter not long after) he call'd him by his Name, whom yet he never saw before, and said, *Zaccheus make haste and come down, for to day I must abide at thy house.*

What a surprize may we imagine this Publican was in, who was hated and shunn'd by every body but his Roman Masters, and those of his own vile Trade, to have so great and so holy a Person take such particular notice of him before such abundance of People, and treat him like an Intimate, and invite himself to his House, and have his Name so ready too, when he was sure he was a perfect Stranger to him! This must needs fill him with wonder,
and

Vol. II. and we find it fill'd him with Joy too; for immediately *he made hast and came down and receiv'd his new Guest joyfully.*

But when the People saw this, they were much offended at the kindness Jesus shew'd to so ill a Man, *and they all murmur'd, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner, a notorious griping Oppressor, and one that every body had reason to look upon as a common Enemy.* They thought his Favour mightily misplac'd, when so many others were over-look'd that much better deserv'd it; and it put a sudden *damp* upon their Rejoicings and Acclamations, and turn'd them into reflecting Whispers and Discontent.

However, the merciful Jesus for all that went on with him to his House, and the first entertainment he met with was what of all other was most agreeable to him, the Publicans free ingenuous Confession of his former Wickedness, and hearty Repentance, express'd in his voluntary Promising ample restitution to all that he had wrong'd in that odious Employment he had been in, even beyond what the Law would oblige him to in that Case (for he

he then. was resolv'd to go by *Equity*, Vol. II
and *Conscience*, not by Law) together
with a large Charity to the Poor, even
to the half of his large Estate.

For *he stood and said unto the Lord*,
whose unexpected kindness and affabi-
lity, together with his awful Presence,
and the Holiness of his Character, and
very probably some apt, and well ap-
ply'd Discourse to that purpose, (which
was never wanting in our Lord's Con-
versation) had made great impressions
upon his Spirit, and melted him down
into a deep sense of his Guilt, and true
abhorrence of it; *behold Lord, the half
of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have
taken any thing from any man by false accu-
sation, or extortion and oppression in
my Office, as I can't but own I have,
I restore him four fold: I promise to do
it in thy sacred Presence, who art wit-
ness to the integrity of my Heart, and
know'st I will do as I say.*

To this our Lord return'd, speaking
to *Zaccheus*, and his Disciples, and o-
thers that stood by, *this day is salvation
come to this house; for true Repentance,*
even of the greatest Sinner, will not
fail of Mercy, from him who *desireth
not the death of a sinner, but rather that
he*

Vol. II. *he may turn from his wickedness and live.*

Besides, *he also is the son of Abraham a Jew*, tho' for his former ill Behaviour reputed as a Heathen; and therefore is an object of my Mercy as well as others, without breaking those Rules I have set, of not offering that Mercy to the Gentiles, till the Jews have had the offer and refus'd it. His sorrow for what is past, is as sincere as it is great, and both himself and his Family shall enjoy the happy Fruit of it. I have brought Salvation to his House, and he without delay hath joyfully receiv'd it, and made extraordinary proof of his hearty change of Mind from Sin to God; and like a true Son of the Father of the faithful, is resolv'd to leave all his wicked Ways, especially his former Covetousness, which is a kind of Idolatry, and will dedicate himself to pure and undefil'd Religion for the future: A great part of which consists in *Charity*, visiting the Widow and the Fatherless in their Affliction, and keeping himself unspotted of the World. *And to as many as thus receive me, will I give the Power and Priviledge, of becoming, not the Sons of Abraham only, but the Sons of God.*

This

This is the Sense of what Jesus said Vol. II. to *Zaccheus* after he came into his House, and had heard his free confession of his former ill Practices, and fix'd Resolution to forsake them, and to make the best amends for it he could.

Thus the good Shepherd sought out the lost Sheep, and such was the Joy on both sides when the poor Wretch was found. O the depth of the Riches, of the goodness and compassion of the Saviour of Mankind! And which is still continu'd to us, and *we* may equally rejoice in the happy effects of it, if we gratefully receive it and co-operate with it. And what the Blessed Jesus said, *Revelat. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man open the door I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me*; may be apply'd to every one of *us*, and 'tis our own fault if we don't enjoy the Blessing in the full meaning of it.

He is daily calling upon us by the discourses of his Ministers, to receive him by Faith, and entertain him with Obedience, Devotion and Love; and by the inward Motions of his Blessed Spirit, continually endeavours to make us sensible of, and bring us off from,
vile

Vol. II. vile destructive Courses; to awaken our Consciences into just apprehensions of our guilt and our danger, and stir us up to the performance of our Duty; encouraging our good Intentions, and pious Purposes, by giving us the opportunity of a Religious Acquaintance, excellent Instruction, good Books, and a faithful *Friend*, that will not suffer Sin upon us, but when there is occasion give us affectionate Reproof. Thus does our merciful Redeemer *prevent us with his most gracious favour, and further us with his continual help*; affectionately inviting us to what is our true Happiness, studiously promoting it, and with equal Wisdom and Goodness so disposing our way, that we shall effectually attain it, if we are not extremely wanting to our selves.

And when he has done so much on his part in order to it, he then expects a ready concurrence on ours; that we cheerfully and thankfully embrace the invitations and offers of the Gospel, upon the Gospel Terms; setting heartily about the duties it enjoins; without delay improving the conviction of our Consciences into Reformation; immediately throwing off every weight that

that oppresses them, and discarding for Vol. II. ever with a particular indignation, those Sins which we us'd with most Pleasure to commit; watching against them with more than ordinary circumspection, and making the best satisfaction we can for them, both to God and Man. That we make the best use of the happy opportunities we have put into our Hands of working out our Salvation, yielding a willing compliance to the inward Conduct of God's *Spirit*, and the outward of his Ministers; following the good Example that is given us; and carefully observing the pious Instruction and wise Advice we meet with, taking kindly our Friend's Reproof, and growing the better for it; and by the constant tender Concern our dear Redeemer shews for our well-doing, in the various turns of his kind Providence over us, to be softened into true compunction of Spirit for our past Offences, and inflam'd with such an undissembled Love to him, as will engage us in a course of Universal Obedience to his blessed Will for the future.

Such a concurrence as this, with the gracious Methods he takes to save us,

The **does**

Vol. II. does our Lord expect from us, (and with the greatest reason) in order to their being effectual. For he will not, I was going to say, he *cannot* make us happy whether we will or no; and notwithstanding all his Goodness to us, we shall certainly be miserable, if it does not lead us to Repentance: Nay, that very goodness of his, if neglected and despis'd, will but make us more miserable than ever.

But if, with St. Matthew, and Mary Magdalene, and Zaccheus here, we are *not Disobedient to the Heavenly Calling*, but make haste to entertain our Blessed Master with an affectionate Duty, and follow him with Zeal and Diligence in the Paths of Holiness, and serve him with an humble, thankful, penitent and obedient Heart; then our Happiness will be secure, and our Joy shall be full: Such Joy as cannot be express'd, and which nothing can deprive us of, and such Happiness as will increase our Joy to all Eternity.

Then will he come in to our Souls, and make them the blisful Place of his residence; communicating Grace and Peace, Truth and Love, and all the blessed Fruits of Righteousness: And we, with unspeakable Delight shall re-
turn

turn him the Sacrifice of hearty Praise, Vol. II. and Thanks, and glorify him in our Bodies, and our Spirits which are his. And when 'tis thus with us, we also may say *Salvation is come to this house*, and Jesus will confirm it, and see it verify'd.

Let us now consider more particularly the *amends* this converted Publican resolv'd to make for his former Extortion and Oppression; Behold Lord, says he, *the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold.*

By the Law of *Moses* the measure of restitution was various, according to the nature of the Wrong that was done; as may be seen at large in the 21. and 22. Chapters of *Exodus*.

In case a Man intrusted his Neighbour with any thing to keep, and it was stol'n from him, he was to make restitution to the full value of what was lost; and if the Thief was found, he was to pay double. But if a Man stole an Ox, or a Sheep, and kill'd, or sold it, he was to restore *five* Oxen for an Ox, and *four* Sheep for a Sheep, if he was prosecuted and found guilty; but if he confess'd the Fact before Prosecution

Vol. II. tion, and was willing to make satisfaction; he was only to add a *fifth* part to the Principal, according to the value of it, and offer up a *Ram without blemish* as his *Trespass-Offering to the Lord*, and that should be his atonement. *Levit. 6, 5. 6. 7.*

The Man that had lost what he took charge of to keep, was justly Punish'd to the *full value* of the thing, because of his carelessness and breach of Trust; and because any Knave might pretend that he had lost, what he made away with on purpose. The Thief's Punishment was *double*, because his Fault was much greater, being *manifestly* the wrong-doer, and likewise to discourage such wicked Practices: and if 'twas an *Ox*, or a *Sheep* that was stol'n, and 'twas *sold*, or *kill'd*, then the Penalty was doubled again, to the restitution of four or five for one; because of the Man's being intirely depriv'd of such profitable Creatures beyond recovery, and the trouble and charge he must be at to get a supply, and likewise because of the difficulty of discovering the Theft when the Beast was *kill'd*, *slay'd*, and it may be *eaten*, or else driven no Body knows whither, by the new Owner. And as for

for 5 Oxen being to be restor'd in this case Vol. II.
 for an Ox, and but 4 Sheep for a Sheep; the
 reason of that may be, partly to make
 compensation for the loss of the service of
 so useful a Creature in Plowing their
 Land, and drawing their Carriages, and
 the like; and partly, as *Maimonides* More Ne-
 vuch. Part
 3. Cap. 41. thinks, because 'twas easier in those
 Countries to steal Oxen than Sheep;
 for Sheep feed together in Flocks, and
 the Shepherd's Eye was always over
 them to prevent their straying, or be-
 ing devour'd by Beasts of Prey, and
 'twas a hard matter to carry 'em away
 unless in the Night; but Oxen feed
 dispersedly, here and there at great di-
 stances, so that the Herdsman can't so
 well preserve them. And accordingly
 he observes, that Oxen were more fre-
 quently stol'n than Sheep; and
 therefore there was need of the great-
 er Penalty to deter Men from commit-
 ting what they could do with so much
 ease, and where the damage was so
 great to the Party injur'd.

Now 'tis observable, that *Zaccheus*
 offers a Restitution a great deal above
 what the Law requir'd in *his* Case,
 which was but to restore the same sums
 he had unjustly taken. But a truly

Vol. II. tender Conscience will consider the *Equity* of the thing as well as the Letter of the Law; and therefore, Extortion, and unjust Exaction, and false Accusation, being of the same nature as *Theft*, whereby the Man comes injuriously into the possession of his Neighbour's Goods, and the Person injur'd being not only depriv'd by those wicked Means of the *Principal*, whatever it be, but of the *use and improvement* of it, to his great damage and hindrance in the management of his Affairs: 'Tis but equitable that in the making Restitution, consideration should be had of the intermediate loss the Man sustain'd during the time his Mony or Goods were wrongfully detain'd from him, and so much added to the *Principal*, as at a moderate computation, the improvement might have come to in that time.

And accordingly *Zaccheus*, like a sincere Penitent, was resolv'd thoroughly to unburthen his Conscience of that load of guilt in this matter, which had so long lain upon it; and freely offers every one that he had injur'd by taking more from them than he should have done when he receiv'd the Emperor's
Taxes

Taxes, a *four fold* Recompence: Which Vol. II. must needs be an ample Satisfaction, even to those that had been longest injur'd, and more than enough for those that had but lately been so.

But, lest thro' forgetfulness, or mistakes, or other accidents, he should fail of doing Justice to some that he had wrong'd (as one that had wrong'd so many, might very easily do, notwithstanding his greatest care, and most honest diligent inquiry) he resolves to secure all by making amends some other way, and declares that he will *give half his estate to the poor*. And no doubt but this would be sufficient, and indeed, was more than so great an Extortioner as he is suppos'd to have been, could be able to make good; had not great part of his Wealth been left him by his Ancestors, or otherwise honestly come by. For a *four fold* Restitution would soon have emptied those Baggs that were unjustly fill'd, and had he no others to go to, to which he had a better Title, his Charity to the Poor would have come to nothing.

It must be suppos'd therefore, that he had an Estate which was not got by those vile Arts he made use of to in-

Vol. II. crease it; and half of *that* by way of Atonement, and voluntary Self-revenge, he freely parts with to the Poor to ease his guilty Mind. And so, after undergoing the *odium* of a Publican, and the fatigue and trouble of that hated Office, and the lashes of his own Conscience for many Years; what did he get by it at last, but the loss of all his unjust Gains, which he underwent so much to scrape together, and moreover of half that Estate which was lawfully his own before he began that wicked Trade, and by God's Blessing upon honest Courses might have been enjoy'd with Comfort, and improv'd by as much as 'twas now lessened, to satisfy the importunity of his troubled Conscience, and appease his offended God? To so little account does the gain of oppression turn, to the *oppressor* himself, if he comes to a sense of his Sin, and desires to have it forgiven, and his Soul at rest; and if he continues hardned and regards it not, as he shall not fail to receive the due Reward of his Wickedness in the *other* World, so neither shall his curs'd Posterity fail of paying smartly for it in the conclusion *here*: And the *Moth*, if not destroy'd, will fret the sound.

soundest part of the Garment all into Vol. II.
pieces at last.

Now, from this extraordinary Instance of a thorough compensation made for what was gain'd by the vile Methods of Extortion and Oppression; we may collect what are the measures of Restitution, in case of Wealth unjustly come by, together with the necessity of it, with respect to our account hereafter, and the *Wisdom* of it, as to the best interest of our selves and our Families here.

As for the measures of *Restitution*, in case of ill gotten Wealth, *Zaccheus* is our Pattern, as to the *Equity* of the thing, in his manner of proceeding. I say as to the *Reason* and *Equity* of the thing; for as to the exact proportion of a *four fold* Recompence, and the giving just half such a one's Estate to charitable Uses, a due estimate of all circumstances must determine *that*.

The general Rule in this case is, that we make full amends for the whole injury to the best of our Power; for otherwise Restitution is but made by halves. And consequently, both the *kind* and the *degree* of the injury ought im-

Vol. II. impartially to be consider'd, and the Restitution proportion'd accordingly.

If I have wrong'd a Man of something that would have lain useless by him; then, to restore him the same thing, or something of like Nature and Value, with the addition of some small over-plus as an acknowledgment of my own Fault, and the injustice I have been guilty of to him, may be sufficient. But, if what I have wrong'd him of, be *improveable*, I must restore not the thing only, but something that will answer the improvement of it, which he might be suppos'd to have made in the time I have detain'd it from him, had he had it in his own Possession; and consequently, the more improveable it is, and the more capable he was of improving it, the greater ought to be the consideration; together with some super-addition, by way of Self-punishment, and Atonement to God, and that we may be sure to do enough.

The *circumstances* of the injur'd Person should likewise be consider'd, by which 'twill be best known how far the injury affects him; in proportion to which should be the restitution. As suppose the Man is *Poor*, and the wrong

I do him, tho' not great in *itself*, yet to Vol. II.
him is almost *ruin*, as depriving him of
the present means of his Support, disa-
bling him from carrying on the business
of his Calling, by which he gets his
daily Bread, so that my injustice and
oppression almost sinks him, and re-
duces him to want; in this Case I am
oblig'd to raise him again, and set him
in as good condition as he was when I
wrong'd him, and moreover, to make
him sufficient amends for the trouble
and inconvenience my ill dealing
brought upon him, together with some
allowance for the improvent of what I
wrong'd him of in proportion to the
Time since the injury was done, be-
sides something by way of Self-punish-
ment, and as a Sin-Offering to God,
as I said before: All which, the Con-
science of a true Penitent will not let
him value too low.

Thus *David* upon hearing *Nathan's*
Parable of a rich Man that had exceed-
ing many Flocks and Herds, but spar'd
his own, and forceably took and dress'd
a poor Man's only Ew-Lamb, to enter-
tain one that came to him, which he had
nurs'd up with much Tenderness and
Care, and took delight in, and hop'd
for

Vol. II. for much encrease from; his anger was greatly kindled against the rich Oppressor, and he not only adjudg'd him to restore according to the utmost rigour of the Law in that Case, (which was four fold, as we have seen before) but pronounc'd him even worthy of *Death*, because he was so exceeding Base, and *because he had no Pity.*

2 Sam. 12.

For the Rich to oppress the Poor, for those that have abundance to gripe and squeeze those that scarce have necessities, and thereby bring them to the extremities of Want, is so barbarous and inhumane, that it must be an extraordinary Restitution that can Atone for it; such as will rejoice the injur'd poor Man's Heart more than 'twas griev'd before, and make his circumstances more easy and comfortable than ever.

What has been hitherto said, proceeds upon a supposition, that the injurious Person knows *whom* he has wrong'd and how *far*; but what must be done if he does *not*, and can't recollect every particular Person he has injur'd, nor the value of the wrong he has done him, (which I believe is the Case of *most*, if not *all*, that have long us'd the vile Trade

Trade of Oppression and Fraud in any Vol. II.
way of Business or publick Employ-
ment) what must be done in this
Case?

In answer to this, if we know the
Persons we have wrong'd, but are at a
loſs how far, the best way is to desire
information from them, who very like-
ly may remember it better than we
do, having smarted for it, and felt the
resentment of our ill usage of them;
and then proportion the restitution ac-
cordingly. But if the injury was done
so secretly that they were not sensible
of it, and had too good an Opinion of
us to suspect any such dealing from us,
and so were wrong'd they know not
when, nor how, and can give us no
direction in the matter; then, we must
do according to our own best remem-
brance after an impartial Enquiry, to-
gether with some additional exceed-
ings, lest our Memory should deceive
us, and we take the injury to be less
than indeed it was.

But if we are conscious, that we
have wrong'd many whose Names we
have forgot, a general invitation to all
such to come in, and make the injuries
they have receiv'd appear, will be the
most

Vol. II. most effectual Course; like what *Zaccheus* said, *If I have wrong'd any man by false accusation, I'm ready to restore him four fold.* And if some of those whom we know we have wrong'd, are dead, then restitution must be made to their *Heirs*, or others, to whom their Right is legally transferr'd. And in case, neither the Persons themselves, nor any that can lawfully claim from them are to be found; we are Debtors to *God and the Poor*: And restitution must be made to *them*, in acts of Charity and Piety, as directed by discretion; but always in such a measure, as to the best of our Knowledge, may exceed, rather than fall short of what is due. And in this we have the example of *Zaccheus* again, who said to *Jesus*, *behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.*

If it be enquir'd how far back restitution is to look, and whether the *Heirs* of a dishonest *Father*, or *Grandfather*, and so on, are to restore what was unjustly gotten, according to the measures before describ'd? I answer, as far as *Law* would oblige to it if the wrong were prov'd, so far it ought to be done in *Conscience*, when we are satisfy'd of the wrong our selves, tho' it

can't

can't be prov'd, and sometimes farther, Vol. II. according to the rules of Equity before mention'd. For, what was wrongfully gain'd is wrongfully kept, so long as the wrong is evident; and he that knows he succeeds to an Estate which his Predecessor unjustly came by, continues on the injustice as long as he detains it from the rightful Owner. But, when great distance of time has made things much in the Dark, and tho' a Man may suspect that his Ancestor made too much hast to be Rich, yet he can't say *whom* he wrong'd, nor how far; in this case, length of time may make a rightful Title. And such alteration of Property, tho' possibly it might not have been so just at the first as it should be, yet when fix'd by long tract of Time, and the Interests of other Persons so intwisted with it, that there would be manifest Injury and Injustice done to *them*, if matters were reduc'd to their ancient State; in this Case of great difficulty and uncertainty, there is a *presumptive* Right allow'd: And it looks like an extraordinary *Permission* at least of Providence, that things should be so settled. Only those in Possession, I think are bound
to

Vol. II. to more than ordinary acts of *Charity*, to make amends for what may still be amiss, tho' they can't tell how to help it.

As for the *order* of Restitution, where divers Persons have been injur'd, and to which of them it should be made *first*; the wrongs of longest standing, when no other sufficient Reason intervenes, should be the first repair'd and in greater proportion too, than those of later date, because of the damage the injur'd Party has sustain'd for so long space, in losing the Improvement and Use of what was unjustly taken, and unjustly detain'd from him; and his being the longest, that is, the first sufferer, gives him the *first* Right to a suitable satisfaction. And so with respect to others still on, the rule is the same, according to the guidance of unbiass'd Prudence, and the reason of the Thing, and the circumstances of the Party injur'd, all which ought to be consider'd in the *Order*, as well as *Proportion* of Restitution. And, when some that I have wrong'd are Rich, and others Poor and Indigent, the latter in all reason should have the most early justice done them;
be.

because the Injury would be far greater, Vol. II.
and of much worse consequence to
them if continu'd, than to others that
can bear it so much better.

In case of a *private Wrong* done to
any Man, of which the injur'd Person
was not sensible, and he that injur'd
him remembers the true value of it,
and knows how to make a full recom-
pence; a *private Restitution* according
to the measures describ'd but now, may
be sufficient, convey'd in such a way
as may conceal the Injurer: for here,
thorough Satisfaction is made to him
that receiv'd the Wrong, and if God
be likewise aton'd by sincere Repen-
tance, I can't see what is wanting un-
less it be some Expression of Revenge
upon our selves by way of Charity,
which should never be omitted.

If a Man is not *able* to make Resti-
tution of ill gotten Possessions (which
indeed very often take to themselves
Wings and fly away unaccountably,
and perish in the using) and his For-
tune is grown so very low, that if every
one had but part of their own, he and
his Family must starve; in such a sad
Case as this, he must firmly resolve to
do it when he *is* able, and do his ut-
most

Vol. II. most endeavour to make himself so, by Industry, and Parsimony: And when he begins to have *ability*, then to begin to *restore*, tho' it be but by little and little, that he may ease his Conscience by degrees, of that intollerable load of Guilt he has contracted by his former Injustice and Oppression. And he that will not reduce his way of living to as narrow a compass as is possible, and cut off all unnecessary Expences, but lives delicately and luxuriously at other Men's Cost, and who, in the mean time by the Wrongs that he has done them, are in want, if not of the necessaries, yet of many of the conveniences of Life; I'm sure this Man, (and I'm afraid there are too many such) has no real intention of making Restitution, whatever he may pretend to the World, and the continu'd falseness of his Heart is known to God.

But if there is a real *Inability* of Restitution, we ought to give the injur'd Person the satisfaction of an acknowledgement, and a promise to restore when we shall be able; and 'till then, to be always ready to do him the best Offices, and most useful Services we can.

As

As soon therefore, as any Man is be- Vol. II.
come sensible of his Duty in this Mat-
ter, let him immediately and heartily
set about it in the best manner he can,
and by no means put it off to hereaf-
ter, much less defer the doing of it till
his Death; for *God is a swift Witness* ^{3 Mat. 3.}
against the Oppressor, and may call him
hence to give Account of his Steward-
ship, sooner, and in a more suddain
manner, than he's aware of. And
it will prove a very dreadful Reckoning
if he has not made amends for his Ex-
tortions and Frauds, and the vile Me-
thods he took of Enriching himself by
the Ruin of others, by ample Restitu-
tion.

What Men wilfully put off from
Time to Time, relating to their Duty,
and the Amendment of their Faults,
out of an Unwillingness to do it, and
a Loathness to part with their Darling
Vices, and which it may be they find
to be thriving ones, and such as enlarge
their Estates; what Men delay too long
of this Nature, and upon such Ac-
counts, God sometimes gives them no
further Opportunity of doing, but by a
hasty Summons calls them to his Great
Audit.

Vol. II. But suppose a Man has Time to set his Affairs in Order before he dies, and his Illness does not disable him from giving Directions to those that succeed him, concerning the Restitution of his ill-gotten Wealth, and 'tis better late than never; yet who would trust that to others upon which his Salvation depends, if he could do it himself! And if they should prove unfaithful in discharging so disagreeable a Trust, I'm afraid his *Intending* well, will turn to but little Account, because, he might effectually have done the thing himself, but out of corrupt Regards deferr'd it to the Last; and when he could enjoy the Gain of Oppression no longer, then thought of Refunding, and committed the doing it to others, who he might probably think would be as loath to do it as he, and find as many Shifts and Evasions, and Excuses to put it off, as he had done before.

Wherefore, since the Obligation to Restitution commences from the very instant that the Wrong was done, and the longer 'tis delay'd the greater the Injury grows, and consequently the greater the Guilt; and both the *Measure* of Restitution, and the difficulty of

of duly *Proportioning* and *Placing* it be- Vol. II.
ing very much increas'd (as we have
heard) by length of Time; and so much
depending upon its being *thorough-*
ly done, no less than our eternal Hap-
piness in the other World, as we shall
see presently; and the Hazards and
Uncertainties that attend the putting
it off till our Death, and trusting it to
the Performance of others, being so
many and so great: 'Twill be our great-
est Wisdom, all Things duly consider'd,
now immediately to begin to do it con-
scientiously our selves, and then we
may hope to see it brought to a happy
Conclusion.

'Tis very likely, this whole Account
of the Measures, and manner of *Resti-*
tution, may be look'd upon as too
strict, and the Lesson too hard to be
learn'd; and Mens unwillingness to
part with the Wealth they have been
so long in Possession of, and have taken
so much Pains to come by, together
with the shame that will attend their
thus plainly owning themselves to have
been Men of great Injustice and De-
ceit, will probably be very strong Ob-
jections against their putting this Du-
ty in Practice.

Vol. II. But if the Thing in it self is highly reasonable and just, as we have already seen, (and I'm very Confident every *Injur'd* Person thinks, whatever the *Injurer* may do;) and if 'tis likewise made indispensibly necessary by our Holy Religion, in order to the obtaining God's Pardon for the Commission of such great Sins, and avoiding the extream and endless Punishment of them, as we shall now proceed to shew: how much soever it may be against the Grain, it must be done, as we hope to escape what is infinitely worse.

Now, besides the many Places in the Old Testament which are very severe against the Sins of Rapine, and Fraud, and Oppression, and enjoyn the particular Measures of Restitution, as we have seen; the Gospel strikes home at the very Root of all injurious Practices, and utterly excludes those that are guilty of, and persist in them, from the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Lu. 31. Our blessed Master charges us, *As ye would that Men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise*: And who is there but desires to be fairly dealt by, and if wrong'd; to have full Restitution? He also plainly tells us, *That except our*
Righ-

Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of Vol. II.
the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no
case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; ^{5 Mat. 20.}
and They, he tells us, were full of Ex- ^{23 Mat.}
tortion, and devour'd Widows Houses; ^{14.} — ^{25.}
and therefore whoever is guilty of the
same Sins, and continues in them,
must share in the same sad Punish-
ment.

St. Paul tells us expressly, That Ex- ^{1 Cor. 6.}
tortioners shall not inherit the Kingdom of ^{10.}
God; and strictly charges that no Man ^{1 Thess.}
go beyond, and defraud his Brother in any ^{4. 6.}
Matter, for the Lord is the Avenger of all
such; unless they speedily Repent, as is
always to be understood in the Threat-
nings of the Gospel. But, as a learn-
ed Prelate well observes, " 'Tis a Con- ^{Bp. Tay-}
tradiction for a Man to say he is ^{lor, Unum}
sorry for his Acts of Stealing, (we ^{Necess.}
may add of Gripping, Extortion, and ^{chap. 4.}
Oppression) who yet rejoices in the ^{sect. 3.}
Purchase, and retains it. Every ^{§. 50.}
Man that Repents, is bound to
make his sinful Act as much as he
can to be undone, and the Moral
Revocation or Nolation of it, is our
Entercourse with God only, who
takes and accepts that which is the
All that can be done to him. But
God

Vol. II. " God takes Care of our Brother also,
" and therefore will not accept his
" own share, unless All interested Per-
" sons be satisfy'd as much as they
" ought. And how can that be done
in case of injurious wrongful dealing
by them, without proportionable Re-
stitution?

Let the greedy fraudulent Oppressor then, that is unwilling to restore what he has unjustly gotten, ask himself our Saviour's Question, *What will it profit me to gain the whole World, and lose my own Soul, and what shall I give in exchange for my Soul*, when it shall be required of me by the Executioners of God's just Vengeance? And as for the *shame* that he thinks will attend such Acknowledgments of his former Dishonesty, let him consider, that his then becoming a Man of Probity and Conscience will be much more to his Commendation and Praise, than the detection of his past ill Practices will be to his disgrace. But however, let the Shame be what it will, that Restitution may bring along with it *here* before Man, since 'twill prevent infinitely greater Shame and Confusion of Face in the presence of Jesus, and Saints and Angels

Angels at the Day of Judgment; no Vol. II.
Man in his Senses, but would choose that Shame which is beyond Comparison the least, and which indeed, has very much more of Credit attending it than Shame?

But the best, and the wisest Choice of all, is utterly to avoid all those vile Courses which will bring us into such perplexing Straits as these, and keep in the plain, safe Way of honest Integrity, *to keep Innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right,* as the Psalmist expresses it, *For that shall bring a Man peace at the last.*

One thing more we are to observe, which is, that Restitution is necessary, not only with respect to our Happiness in the other World, but in regard of our best Interest here; the Peace and Quiet of our own Minds, the true Relish and Enjoyment of what we have, the real Prosperity of our selves and Families, and the Confirming it to our Posterity for many Generations.

As for the Peace and Satisfaction of our own Minds, 'tis impossible we should ever enjoy That, though in the midst of the greatest Possessions, when our Consciences are burthen'd with the

Vol. II. the Guilt of Fraud and Oppression; but like an over-loaded Stomach, they will be full of sick and nauseous Qualms, bitter Reflections, and painful Strugglings and Convulsions, which will be frequently Returning and Tormenting us, till we have got rid of the intolerable Weight, by conscientious Restitution of whatever has been devour'd by us with a rapacious Greediness and Violence, and is not rightfully our Own.

This is very Elegantly expressed, 20 Job 15, &c. *Though Wickedness be sweet in his Mouth, though he hide it under his Tongue, though he spare it and forsake it not, but keep it still within his Mouth; yet his Meat in his Bowels is turn'd, 'tis the Gall of Asps within him. He hath swallow'd down Riches, and shall vomit them up again, God shall cast them out of his Belly. He shall suck the Poison of Asps, the Vipers Tongue shall slay him. He shall not see the Rivers, the Floods, the Brooks of Honey and Butter; that is, He shall be strangely disappointed of his mighty Expectations of Affluence and Plenty to himself and to his Children, from all the wicked Pains he has taken to raise an Estate in haste, and the*

the great Sums he hath gotten by in-
justice and deceit, for, as follows, v. 8.
Thar which he labour'd for shall he restore,
he shall not swallow it down, it shall ne-
ver turn to good and solid Nourish-
ment, but rather to consuming Disea-
ses, according to his substance shall the Re-
stitution be, and he shall not rejoyce there-
in. Because he hath oppress'd and forsaken
the Poor, because he hath violently taken
away a House which he builded not, surely
he shall not feel Quietness in his Belly, he
shall not save of that which he desir'd,
there shall none of his Meat be left. In
the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in
straits, when he is about to fill his Belly,
God shall cast the fury of his Wrath upon
him, and shall rain it upon him while he
is eating. Terrors shall be upon him,
and disconsolate Darknes of Soul, and
a secret Fire not blown shall consume
him.

Nay, the Vengeance shall reach his
Posterity, for it shall go ill with him that
is left in his Tabernacle. The Heaven
shall reveal his Iniquity, his Vileness shall
be strangely detected and brought to
Light, to his utter Shame and Confu-
sion; and the Earth shall rise up against
him, every Body shall be ready to pull
him

Vol. II. him in pieces as the common Enemy of Mankind. So that *the Increase of his House shall depart, and his Goods shall flow away in the Day of God's Wrath.*

This is the Portion of such a wicked Man from God, and the Heritage appointed to him. And a dreadful Portion it is, and which in many other places of Scripture besides this, is threatned to the Oppressor, and wrongful Dealer, and deceitful Man; particularly those in the Margin, which are worthy our serious perusal.

37 Ps.

Pro. 3.

22, Pro. 16.

5 Ecclef.

8. 17 Jer.

11.

22 Ezek.

12.

And I pray God we may All lay to Heart what has been said, and immediately break off such destructive Courses if engag'd in them, and keep for ever at the utmost distance from them if we are not. Washing our Hands without delay of all ill-gotten Wealth, by a Restitution and Charity, like that of penitent *Zaccheus*; and resolving by God's Grace to renounce the hidden things of Dishonesty, no longer to walk in Craftiness, but in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity to have our Conversation in the World. And then, a little that the Righteous hath, will be found better than great Riches of the Ungodly; for a good Man leaveth

leaveth an Inheritance to his Childrens Vol. II.
Children, and the Wealth of the Sinner is
laid up for the Just; And the Righteous
eateth to the satisfying of his Soul, but
the Belly of the Wicked shall want.

IX.

Practical

After our Lord had made a Con-
fession of his sin, as we have
heard, and by a Parable of a Noble-
man

Practical OBSERVATIONS
UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

IX.

*Our Saviour washing his
Disciples Feet.*

JOHN 13. 4, 5, &c.

*Jesus riseth from Supper, and layeth aside
his Garments, and took a Towel and
girded himself.*

*After that, he poureth Water into a Ba-
son, and began to wash the Disciples
Feet, and to wipe them with the Towel
wherewith he was girded.*

After our Lord had made a Con-
vert of *Zaccheus*, as we have
heard, and by a Parable of a Noble-
man

man that went to take Possession of a Vol. II.
 Kingdom, and committing Money to his
 Servants to improve for his use in his ^{19 Luke}
 Absence, shewing that he expects our ^{12.}
 growing in Grace under the Means of
 it that we enjoy, and making the best
 use we can of the Gifts or Talents that
 in any kind we receive from him; and
 by his Severity at his Return, to those
 that would not submit to his Govern-
 ment, declaring the sad State of such
 as should obstinately reject the graci-
 ous Offers of the Gospel: We find him
 in a kind of Royal Pomp ascending to
 Jerusalem, riding upon an Ass, which
 he had order'd his Disciples to fetch
 him upon that occasion, thereby to
 signify his high Office, Judges and Ma-
 gistrates of the highest Rank using in
 those Countries so to ride in ancient
 Times, before Solomon fetch'd so many
 Horses out of Egypt, and likewise to
 fulfil the Prophecy of Zechary, 9 ch.
 9 v. Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Sion,
 shout O Daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy
 King cometh unto thee; he is just, and
 having Salvation, lowly and riding up-
 on an Ass, and a Colt, the Fole of an
 Ass; that is, with a mixture both of
 Majesty and Meekness.

And

Vol. II.

And accordingly the People, as was usual when Kings were proclaim'd and appear'd publickly, spread their Garments in the Way, and Branches of Palm-Trees, in token of extraordinary Rejoicing; crying aloud as he went, *Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord, peace in Heaven and Glory in the highest*: Much like the Hymn the Angels sung, when they gave Notice to the Shepherds of the wondrous Birth.

21 Matt.

8. 9.

9 Lucæ

38.

2 Luke

14.

But as soon as he came near and beheld that obstinate ungrateful City, and which would soon be as miserable as it was wicked, his Triumph was over-cast with a melancholly Cloud; and in the midst of the Acclamations of the People, his Heart was full of Trouble for the sad forlorn Condition of that wretched Place, and it soon broke out in a shower of Tears and kind Bemoanings of their then hopeless State: *He wept over it*, with great Tenderness and Pity, and said, *If thou hadst known, even Thou*, which once wert God's favourite City, and blessed above All others, *at least in this thy Day*, when thy long look'd for Messias is come to thee, to make thee truly

bna

truly Glorious and Happy ; *O that thou* Vol. II.
hadst known, the things that belong to thy
Peace ! But now they are hid from thine
Eyes.

The barbarous Murther of him their Saviour, which then they were resolv'd on, and in a few Days after he foresaw they would commit ; he knew would fill up the measure of their Iniquities and seal them up to Destruction : and this touch'd his compassionate Soul to the quick. And from that time to his apprehension in the Garden, (so short was his Triumph, and so soon did his Sorrows return with double force upon him) most of his discourse was upon the melancholly Theme of his own approaching Sufferings and Death, and the dreadful Judgments that would soon overtake that City and Nation, for their Inhumane Treatment of him, and hardned Infidelity, and bring them to utter Ruin.

Now, about two Dayes before the Feast of the Passover *When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world to the Father ; having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* And as he all along shew'd the tenderest Regard for

Vol. II. the Happiness, not of his Apostles only, and chosen Disciples, but of every Sinner that would believe in him, and observe his Doctrine, and submit to his Discipline, and imitate the example of his Holy Life; so, when the Time of his Death drew nigh, he gave still greater Demonstrations of his Affection to them by acts of extraordinary Charity and Condescension, and expressions of the most winning endearment. The latter we may read with great satisfaction in the 15 and 16 chap. of this Gospel; and the former is evident from the passage we are now to consider.

For being, as we are told *Matth. 26. 6.* at this time at Supper in the House of Simon the Leper at Bethany, whom our Lord, probably, had cur'd of that loathsome Disease, and thereby made a Convert of him, and a fast Friend: Supper being ended, the Devil having put it into the Heart of Judas to betray him; That is, he having now taken up that wicked Resolution, thro' some personal Pique perhaps, but certainly thro' Covetousness improv'd by the instigation of Satan (who little thought he was by that means bringing intire Conquest upon himself, and Ruine upon his Kingdom,

dom, so perfectly out was that old Ser- Vol. II.
pentin his Politicks, and taken in his own
Craftiness, as many others of his Pro-
geny have been since in their designs
upon Religion and the Church, and
may they stil be so!) *Jesus knowing that
the Father had given all things into his
hands, and that he was come from God, and
went to God; That is, tho' conscious to
to himself of his high Authority, and
the vast extent of his Power, the Divi-
nity of his Original, and his dearness to
God; from whom, as he at first came,
to perform the greatest and most glo-
rious blessed Work that ever the Pow-
er, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God
was engag'd in, so to him he was ready
to return, and be reinstated in that ex-
ceeding Glory which he had at his right
Hand from all Eternity: Tho' conscious
of all this, yet with wondrous Humi-
lity, and Condescension, and Charity
exemplary to all succeeding Ages of the
Church, and every Member of it from
the highest to the lowest; He rose from
supper towards the close of it before
the Table was remov'd, and laid aside
his loose upper Garments, as waiters us'd
to do, that they might be more ready
for their service, and took a towel and gird-*

Vol. II. *ed himself, and then pour'd water into a bason out of some larger Vessel that was fill'd with it, and always ready at their Meals for divers uses, and began to wash his disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

Now this action of Jesus, must needs upon all accounts be very surprizing to them. For tho' Water was always call'd for as a mark of Respect to every honour'd Guest, and to cleanse and refresh their Feet after the Dust and Heat of Travelling in those hot Countries, where they did not wear close Shooes as we do, but *Sandals* which left the upper part of the Foot naked and uncover'd; yet this was done before eating, soon after the Person came in, and some Servant employ'd to wash and dry the Feet with Linnen provided for that purpose: But Supper was almost ended when Jesus took that mean servile Office upon him, and that in a place where himself was a Stranger, which made them wonder the more at it, and to his *Inferiors*, his own Disciples whom he chose to Minister to him, and attend upon him, which made it seem most strange of all; insomuch, that when he came to *Simon Peter*, and offer'd to wash

wash his Feet, stooping down in a posture Vol. II.
fit for a work of that nature, *Peter*
being fill'd with great amazement,
and in an awful sense of the vast
distance between *him* and *Jesus*, be-
tween the eternal Son of God, as he
had before confess'd him to be, and
a wretched sinful Creature, the great
Messias and a poor Fisherman, his un-
worthy servant; cry'd out with ad-
miration, *Lord, dost Thou wash My*
Feet! To which the humble *Jesus*
mildly answer'd, *what I do, thou knowest*
not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.

'Thou may'st well be at a loss for the
'reason of this behaviour of mine at
'present, so seemingly unsuitable to the
'Character I bear; but believe there is
'good Reason for it, or else I should not
'do it, only first let the thing be done,
'and then thou shalt know the reason.
And it would be our Wisdom, as it is
our Duty, in many Instances of the
conduct of Providence, whether pub-
lick or private, which puzzle our un-
derstandings, and of which we can
give no account; to reflect upon those
Words of our Lord, and think of the
unsearchableness of Gods doings, that
his Ways and his Judgements are past

Vol. II. finding out, and the reasons of them inscrutable, till he shall please to reveal them to us. And tho' his Thoughts, and Methods of acting are not as ours are, (and with what Modesty can we think they should be?) yet infinite Wisdom, and Goodness, and Justice does direct them all; and the time will come that we shall know it to be so, if we can but wait till then.

And would it not be much better done to compose and calm our Minds by reflections of this nature, in any strange turns of Providence, than with a restless and immodest Curiosity to be prying into what God seems to design to keep for a while as a *secret*; and put our Thoughts upon the stretch to discover what is infinitely out of our *Ken*, and then when we find our selves still in the dark, to be uneasy and dissatisfy'd with such unaccountable Proceedings, and perhaps entertain hard Thoughts of the great mysterious Governour of the World, because he loves to act thus involv'd in Clouds and Darkness and won't vouchsafe to make us of his privy Council, and acquaint us immediately with the Reasons, and Motives, and Springs of all his proceedings?

For

For such poor wretches as we are, thus Vol. II.
to fret against God, and *disquiet our selves*
in vain, what intolerable arrogance is
it, and the extreamest folly! How
much more *becoming us*, and how much
happier for us will it be, in all such Cases
to take our Blessed Master's excellent ad-
vice, and *possess our Souls in Patience*,
and repose our trust in him, in all the
strangest varieties of things; hoping
that tho' we know not *now* what 'tis he
does, nor *why* he does it, yet we shall
know *heereafter*, if it be fit for us to
know, or any way conduceing to our
good: And if 'tis always kept as a secret
from us, then to believe that it did not
concern us, at least to know the *Reasons*
of it; and however, that since it was
his doing, it must needs be for the
wisest and best *Reasons* tho' to us un-
known.

How quiet would our own Breasts
be, and how quiet the World too, would
we thus remember that *God Reigns*, and
governs all Things with an Unerring,
though invisible Hand, and therefore
Humbly sit down satisfy'd; and not per-
versly, and *Ridiculously* embroil our
selves and every thing within our reach,
because the supreme Ruler is pleas'd to

Vol. II. take some Methods which we are not able to Account for! But, Lord, What are *We*! What is our Knowledge, our Understanding, and our Prudence, but Ignorance, and Folly, and Mistake! And what art *Thou*! But the mighty Counsellor, the Omniscient and All-wise God! O, therefore, may we bring down every arrogant reflecting Thought that exalts it self against Thee, and calls thy admirable Management in Question, who always doest what is Best!

But St. Peter, though he had that excellent hint given him, which we have now taken Notice of, yet could not bear the Thoughts of *Jesus* washing the foul Feet, of one so much below him as he was, nor endure to see him preparing for so servile an Employment; and with his usual earnestness and warmth, said to him, *Thou shalt never wash my Feet.*

Such a mixture was there of Shame, and Reverence and Love in the Apostles Breast, as would not let him suffer his Lov'd, his Honour'd, his Blessed Divine Master, to do a thing so much beneath him as that was; and had we been in his Place, which of us but would have
said

said as he did, and prevented it if possible. Vol. II.
sibly we could?

But when Jesus answer'd him again, and said unto him, with that commanding Air of Majesty, which when he pleas'd to assume, gave a Mighty force and influence to what he spake, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me*; then he was convinc'd that he must refuse no longer, and that his reluctancy how great and just soever must give place to Duty: especially when the deprival of an interest in his Saviour, would be the consequence of his not complying. But what was the meaning of that?

I take it to be a figurative way of expressing by the *bye*, the necessity of every Man's being inwardly purify'd by Christs Doctrine, and wash'd from the guilt of his iniquities by his Blood, which he was then going to shed for the sins of the World, and thoroughly initiated into the Life and Spirit of the Gospel; in order to the recovery of God's Favour, and having a share in the Happiness which he design'd for miserable mankind, thro' the mediation of his Beloved Son. For our Lord's prime intention in washing his Disciples Feet,

Vol. II. was to teach a Lesson both to *them* and *us* of another Nature, as we shall see in the Sequel ; only upon St. Peter's refusing to let him wash his Feet, he took occasion to insinuate in a mystical way, according to his usual manner, this great and most concerning Truth that he came to *save* the World by *purifying* it. As if he had said, as unwilling as thou art that I should wash thy Feet, a polluted Wretch thou wouldst be, and utterly unfit for the Kingdom of God, unless I make the *clean* ; not only take away the *Punishment* of thy Sin, but destroy the *Power* of it ; for where Righteousness and true Holiness, and Purity of Heart and Life are wanting, 'tis in vain to hope for Salvation, although I shed my Blood to purchase it.

This is a most concerning Truth indeed, and deserves our most serious Consideration. And it is plainly signify'd to us by the great initiating Rite of *Baptism* ; which does not only make us clean with respect to what is *past*, but represents to us the Necessity, and lays the highest Obligations upon us, of *keeping* our selves so for the *future* ; as we expect to receive the Benefits of it,

it, and hope to be admitted into that **Vol. II.**
holy as well as *happy* Place, into which
 no unclean Soul can enter.

'Tis the inward Purification of our
 Souls by the Grace of God co-opera-
 ting with our own sincere Endeavours,
 that is signify'd by the outward wash-
 ing, and must make it effectual to us;
 and even the most precious Blood of
 Christ it self, which was shed to take
 away the Sins of the World, and cleanse
 us from all Iniquity, and will most cer-
 tainly accomplish that great happy
 Work, unless we put a Bar to it our
 selves; may yet be rendred of no effect
 to us if we will not be so cleans'd, but
 continue filthy still, and defeat the
 gracious Intentions of God towards us
 by our obstinate Impiety. And there-
 fore, says the Holy Jesus, *Blessed are the* **Mat. 5. 8.**
pure in Heart, for they shall see God; but
 to the incorrigibly Wicked, whatever
 fair Profession they may make, he will
 say at the great Close of all things, *De-*
part from me, I know ye not ye Workers of **Mat. 7.**
Iniquity: Depart from me ye Cursed into **22, 23.**
everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and **Luke 13.**
his Angels. **27.**
Mat. 25.
41.

So

Vol. II. So that 'tis evident, he that refuses to be thus thoroughly purify'd by Christ, *has no part with him*; and shall be utterly disown'd by him when he comes to receive to himself those that are his, which are none but those that are zealous of good Works.

And 'twas in this sense that St. Peter understood our Lord, when he said, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me*; for as soon as he heard those words, his former Refusal was turn'd into vehement Desire of such a Washing; and he said, Lord, *not my Feet only, but also my Hands and my Head! Wash me thoroughly from my Wickedness, and cleanse me from all my Sin*; purify not my Passions and Affections only (which were usually signify'd by the Feet) but my Thoughts, my Notions, my Intentions and Designs, and all my Actions, that I may be clean throughout.

To this Jesus reply'd, still alluding to this figurative meaning, *He that is wash'd needeth not save to wash his Feet, and is clean every whit*. As if he had said, he that hath been once effectually initiated into the Fellowship of my Religion by Water and the Holy Ghost; and hath been wash'd in the

Laver

Laver of Regeneration, and purify'd by the Blood of the everlasting Covenant from his former Guilt; this Man need not be so washed again. But if he clears his Conscience from the Defilement contracted by his daily Transgressions, by a daily Repentance; purifies his Affections still more and more, subdues his Passions, makes it his Business with a hearty honest Care and Diligence to cleanse himself from all incidental Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and by a constant Progression, though not with equal Steps, Endeavours to perfect Holiness in the fear of God: He is clean every whit, or shall be esteem'd as such, thro' Jesus Christ.

This is *Evangelical Purity*, these are the gracious Terms of the Gospel, which accepts of *Sincerity* instead of *Spotless Obedience*; of a daily *cleansing*, instead of *spotless Perfection*; through the infinite Merit of the Blood of the great expiatory Sacrifice, and the mighty Efficacy of the Waters of Baptism, whereby we were *washed from our old Sins*, and had an Interest in the All-Purifying Virtue, of that most precious Blood for the future.

How

Vol. II. 15 How good, how merciful is this! How easy does it make the Yoke of Jesus, and how light his Burthen! And how utterly inexcusable are they that will not *thus wash* that they may be *clean*! And yet, so brutish are we, so much in love with Filthiness, that too often we are better pleas'd to wallow in the Mire, and *work all Uncleaness with greediness*. We think the little Pains of Repentance a greater Evil than the foulness of Vice and Guilt, and so let it continue on till 'tis *ingrain'd*, and almost as hard to be remov'd as the Spots of a *Leopard*, or the sable Hue of an *Ethiopian*; and thereby become an Abomination to the God of Purity, to the bright Spirits that are employ'd by him to Minister to us in this our State of Probation, and to all good Men.

For how base, how sordid is it, how unworthy a Creature so nearly ally'd to Heaven as every Christian is, to choose the Pleasures of a *Beast*, before those of Reason and Religion, of Angels and glorify'd Spirits, and delight in the Deformity and Filth of Sin more than in the charming Beauty of Holiness and Virtue, and forfeit the Glories of Heaven for the sake of a Sink and a Dung-hill!

One

One would wonder a Creature that Vol. II.
has such Alliance, such Hopes and Expectations, and is able to *think* and consider, should ever act at such a despicable rate as this. But so it is, and some of all Ranks and Stations are thus forsaken of all Judgment, Reflection, and Thought, and every thing that is Rational and Good; and to our Shame and Reproach be it spoken, 'tis grown a common Evil under the Sun.

Judas was the first sad Example of it under the Gospel-State; and though an Apostle of Jesus, one of those whom he made choice of as the chief Ministers of his Kingdom, and for whom Thrones of Glory were prepared in Heaven; yet, prompted by filthy Avarice, he fell, like an Apostate Angel, from his exalted Station, into the bottom of the dire Portion of accursed Spirits, so that our Blessed Lord himself could say, it would have been better for him, if he never had been born.

And this he signify'd before Hand, when he had wash'd that Traytor's Feet among the rest (O wondrous Meekness and Charity!) by saying to his Apostles, *ye are clean, but not all; for* he

Vol. II. *he knew who should betray him, therefore he said, ye are not all clean:* Intending by that, and divers other Hints, if possible, to awaken the Conscience of that Wretch, and divert him from committing such a horrid piece of Villany; but all in vain. Let none of us therefore be *high minded but fear*, and walk circumspectly, taking heed lest we also fall; as some of the Angels of Heaven, and an Apostle we see have done before us, (O dreadful Example!) and that beyond Recovery.

Now, after Jesus, with wonderful Humility and Condescension, had perform'd the inferiour Office of washing his Disciple's Feet, and upon Occasion of St. Peter's modest Refusal when he came to *him*, spoke the great and concerning Truths we mention'd but now; *he took his Garments, and sat down again*, resuming the high Character that belong'd to him, and began to acquaint them with the reason of that extraordinary and surprizing Action of his. *Know ye*, says he, *the meaning and design of what I have done to you?* 'Tis probable you don't, and are full of wonder at it, but now I'll tell you.

Ye call me Master and Lord, and so far Vol. II. I am I from forgetting what I am, tho' I have stoop'd so low, as like a Servant to wash and wipe your Feet, that I own ye say well when ye call me so, for so I am. If I then, that am your Lord and Master have wash'd your Feet, condescended to the meanest Offices, and in more respects than one have put on the form of a Servant for your good; ye also ought to wash one anothers Feet, and think nothing too mean to do, for the promoting one anothers Happiness, and that of all the World. And let me tell you, I expect it from you; for therefore have I given you this Example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

And although 'tis to your great Honour that ye are my chosen Apostles, to whom I will commit the chief Government of my Church upon the Earth, and by whose means the World shall be converted to the Belief of the Gospel; yet let not this puff you up to a domineering highth of Spirit, but remember that *the Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that hath sent him.* If I, therefore have so abas'd my self to advance the eternal Interest of Mankind,

Y

and

Vol. II. and shall soon be abas'd still lower ; you have no reason to think of nothing but *Rule*, and *Dominion*, and *Greatness*, but rather to esteem your selves as the Servants of all, in the great Work of Reconciling a sinful World to God, which I shall commit to your Management, and not think the lowest Condescensions too much, to carry it on with Success.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them ; and now that I have told you my meaning in stooping so low as to wash your Feet, and how I expect you should follow my Example ; your actually doing so, will raise your Happiness to the highest pitch in the Conclusion : And the more you humble your selves to promote the Good of Mankind here ; the more gloriously shall you shine in my heavenly Kingdom above. And need enough was there for such a Lecture to the Apostles, back'd with such an Example, at that time.

For not long before, upon his discouraging of the Approach of his Kingdom, which notwithstanding all that he had said to undeceive them, they took to be a glorious Temporal one, they

they were contending with one another who should be the greatest Minister in it, and have the most honourable Post, and chief share in the Government of it; And the Mother of St. James and St. John, (or as St. Mark says they themselves, that is, probably, both she, and they) upon account of the near Relation they bore to our Lord, thought they might well expect the Preference, and went and petition'd him, that the one of them might sit on his right Hand, the other on his left in his Kingdom; and thereby gave great Offence to all the rest.

Now, this ambitious Temper of theirs favouring more of the Spirit of the World than of the Gospel, and being such as might prove of dangerous Consequence to the Church after his decease; their wise and humble Master took this most affecting way to check it, and give them a right Notion of the Nature of their Office, as his Ministers and Apostles. The greatest of whom was to be the Servant of all, and not to exercise an arbitrary despotick Dominion over others, as the Princes of the Nations did, but like him, to govern with Meekness of Wisdom;

Vol. II. *dom*; and such an Authority as would not think much to condescend to the weakest and meanest Persons under their Care, for their spiritual Good. As he himself came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and even to give his Life as a Ransom for many, humbling himself unto Death, the shameful Death of the Cross, that we might live thro' him.

He tells them indeed, *Luke 22. 29. I appoint unto you a Kingdom*, the Affairs of which you are to administer; but then he subjoins, 'Tis such a Kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, and that was not of this World, not a Temporal but a Spiritual Kingdom; the greatest Glory of which was not Pomp and Grandeur, but Humility, and Meekness, and Lowliness of Heart, which he elsewhere expressly commanded them to learn of him, and of which he set them an admirable Example when he washed their Feet; but at the same time asserting his Superiority over them, as we have seen, lest his submitting to so mean an Office should occasion their Contempt.

*Mat. 11.
29.*

What an excellent Mixture was here of Precept and Example, Humility and Au-

Authority; the lowest Condescension, Vol. II. and yet withal, a just keeping up his Character among them!

There is nothing so powerfully moving as the good Example of Superiours, when they do themselves what they require from others, and bind no heavier Burthens upon their Brethren's Shoulders than they carry upon their own. And when there are humble, condescending, exemplary Governours and Instructors of the People; they must be vile indeed, and utterly excusable, that will not in all things be Tractable, and Obedient, and Emulous of coming up to so excellent a Pattern.

Who can be Proud and Haughty, Imperious and Disdainful, towards those below him, that sees the eternal Son of God washing the Feet of a few poor Fishermen! Who can think much to stoop to the meanest Offices of Charity to those of the same Nature with himself, that reflects upon the amazing Condescensions of the *Divine* Redeemer of Mankind!

What Spiritual Teacher and Governour would grudge to take the greatest Pains, and use even a *servile* Diligence

Vol. II. to cleanse the Souls of the poorest Creatures committed to his charge, from the Pollutions of a lewd vicious Life, by affectionate Advice, and seasonable kind Reproof, and Instruction suited to their Capacities and Wants; that thinks of the Example which the compassionate Jesus has set him, and likewise expressly commanded him to follow!

And how winning would such Behaviour be, to every one that had the least Spark of Goodness in him; and was not hardened into an Insensibility of every thing that is truly excellent and lovely!

But, God knows there are too many such; who would trample Humility into the Dirt, were there not something else to guard it from their Insults; and that is *the Spirit of Government*: Whereby Superiours know themselves to be so, and expect that others should know it too, and respect and observe them accordingly; and upon occasion assert their Authority, by a prudent Exercise of it.

This, the meek lowly Jesus did, as we have seen already; and 'tis but necessary to the keeping up that Government,

ment, without which no Society could Vol. II. subsist; and the preserveing the Awe and Reverence due to those that administer it, without which they could bear no *Sway*, but would be despis'd and slighted by every resolute Offender.

And therefore, as it is no argument of Pride, that those who are to instruct and guide and govern others keep up the Character of their station, but is rather what becomes them, and the way to render them thoroughly useful in it; so 'tis a faulty Humility in *such* to be too easy, and carry the Reins with too slack a Hand, which will soon make Government contemptible, and the best Laws to signifie nothing.

And accordingly we find St. Paul, that great Example of a wise and good Governor, in several places of his Epistles to the *Corinthians*, sometimes with the greatest condescension *becoming all things to all that he might gain the more*; and then again, speaking in the stile of a Superiour, commanding Obedience, and threatening severe Punishment to such as should be found guilty of contumacy and neglect. Sometimes *in the Spirit of Meekness* he intreats, and perswades, and even beseeches, with all

Vol. II. all the tender softness and affection
Phil. v. imaginable; tho' at the same time
 8. 9. artfully intinuating his Power to *enjoin*
 what he requests: and when there is
 just Cause, and the milder way won't
 do, he chides as severely and rebukes
 as sharply, and shakes the Rod at
 those, whom fair means will not win
 to a compliance with their Duty.

Sometimes he *denies* himself what he
 might otherwise lawfully do, and enjoy,
 rather than give offence to the weakest
 Christian that is so in reality, and not
 only in pretence; but yet with great
 Resolution he withstood St. Peter him-
 self even to his Face, when he was
 blame worthy, and firmly kept his
 ground against the opposition of
 almost the whole Body of the Jewish
 Converts, who were for mixing more
 of Judaism with Christianity, than
 the liberty of the Gospel would
 allow.

Gal. 2.

And as he acted himself, so he ad-
 vis'd Timothy and Titus to do, the former
 of whom he had made Bishop of Ephe-
 sus, and the other of Crete.

He charges them to be meek and pati-
 ent, to be gentle to all men in meekness to
 instruct those that oppose themselves, not

to rebuke an elder, but intreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren; but withal, when occasion requires, to Exhort, Reprove and Rebuke with all Authority, and to behave themselves with that exemplary Holiness, and venerable Gravity, that no Man should have the least reason to despise them. As may be seen at large in his Epistles to them.

This is that meekness of Wisdom, as St. James expresses it, or wise Meekness, *Jam. 3. 13.* that knows when to be Meek and Humble, Gentle and Compliant; and when to Govern, and Act with Authority, Resolution, and Power.

This is the true Spirit of Government in the Christian sence, which every Superiour should make it his business to acquire; and here is such a due mixture of *Levity* and *Goodness*, with *Power*, as will secure the latter from running into Tyranny and Oppression, and preserve the former from Contempt. And it shews the excellent Wisdom of our Holy Religion, and the Divine Author of it, in proportioning so exactly things of so different a nature, as *Meekness* and *Power*; both which, singly and alone, would be destructive of good Government, but when

Vol. II. when so well ballanc'd, raise it to Perfection.

So that the Christian Religion, is as far from approving *Anarchy* as *Tyranny*; and though we are not to exercise *Lordship*, and domineer it insultingly over one another, as *the Kings of the Gentiles* do over their miserable *Vassals*, ruling with a *Scepter of Iron* and a *Whip of Scorpions*; yet Government is necessary in a Society of Christians, as well as other Men, only it must be administred with a due Temper of brotherly Kindness and Charity. Remembring that we are all of the same happy Family of Jesus, and Heirs of the same heavenly Inheritance; only some placed in a higher Station, some in a lower, as the Wisdom of our great Lord and Master thinks fit to order and dispose.

Let us all therefore, whatever our Station may be, make it our sincere Endeavour to do all the Good in it we are able; to condescend to those of the lowest degree, and not refuse the meanest Offices that may promote their Happiness. Having often in our Minds the Example our Blessed Saviour hath set us, *who went about doing Good*, and with wondrous Humility took up-
on

on him the form of a Servant, and Vol. II.
stoop'd infinitely below the Dignity of
his own Divine Nature to exalt ours
to the highest pitch of Bliss, and Ex-
cellence, and Glory, that it is capeable
of, even beyond what we could ever
have desir'd or wish'd for. And when
the glorious Captain of our Salvation,
with so much Goodness condescends so
low, to us poor miserable Wretches,
Thall we insult and lord it over one
another? When he who is so far ex-
alted above us, govern'd with a gentle
Mildness, and enjoin'd us to tread in
his Steps; shall we dare to behave our
selves with Pride and Passion, and a
haughty Disregard of those, whom
Nature has made *equal* to us, though
other *adventitious* things have given us
the *preference*?

It becomes us rather, humbly to re-
flect, who made the difference between
us; who set *us* above, and *them* be-
low; to remember, that all we *have*,
we have *receiv'd*, and that for the Good
of others who have less; and of which
we must give an account proportion-
able, and our Reward or Punishment
be according to what we have done
in our several Stations, whether it be
Good

Vol. II. Good or Evil. For be our Authority, and Dignity and Power never so great, if we abuse it to God's Dishonour and the Peoples Injury; he that exalted us knows how to bring us down again, and will do it effectually at first or last.

But then, if Superiours and Governours are to be thus meek and lowly, and gentle and good; how much more does it become those of inferiour Rank to be so, both to those above them, and to one another?

Rom. 13. 5.

St. Paul says, they *must needs be subject to the higher powers, not only for Wrath but also for Conscience sake; and exhorts them to know those which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works*

1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.

sake. And likewise, in lowliness of Mind to esteem each other, in some Regards to be better than themselves; and accordingly to be ready to do their Brethren all good Offices with an affectionate Respect, not every one, with a stingy selfishness, looking on his own things, his own Interest and Advantage only; but every man also on the things, the Good, the Benefit, the Happiness of others.

2 Phil. 3. 4.

This

This is *Christianity* in this respect, Vol. II. and how lovely is it! How *noble* and how *generous* is this *Meekness*; and how *publick Spirited* is this *lowliness of Mind*! How much more honourable is it, thus *in Honour to prefer one another*; than to overlook every Body that we think below us, with a supercilious Scorn and Neglect! What an ornament is it to be thus *cloath'd with Humility*, and so nearly to resemble the meek the lowly, the beneficent and condescending Jesus! How far does the Glory of such Abasement, excell all the vain Pomp, and State, and Glitter of the World!

And when the time of future Recompense shall come, and that *Heavenly Glory* shall be reveal'd which is prepar'd for those that follow'd their great Masters Steps here below; then the nearer they came to him in Meekness and Condescension while upon Earth, the nearer shall they come to him in the expressible Glories and Beatitudes of Heaven.

There Humility will receive its utmost Exaltation, those and that took the lowest Room here, shall have the Honour to be called up higher, and seated
Lu. 14. 8.
&c.
nearest

Vol. II, nearest the Throne of their humble glorious Redeemer. When those haughty Wretches who made it their business to despise and undervalue others, and raise themselves by trampling upon their Brethren; shall be forc'd down, with Shame and Confusion, and Horror inexpressible, into those dismal Abodes prepar'd for proud aspiring Lucifer, and his apostate Legions, in the lowest Hell.

One thing more I shall observe upon this remarkable Passage of our Saviours *washing his* Disciples Feet, and so conclude; and that is the *time* of his doing it, immediately before his Instituting the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, in perpetual Memory of those bitter Sufferings and that cruel Death, which he was then just ready to undergo for the Redemption of sinful Mankind, as the true *Paschal Lamb*, which was offer'd to take away the Sins of the World.

And therefore, it not obscurely shews us, that *Purity, Humility, and Charity* are requisite to our performing that Holy Duty worthily, so as that the Blessing of God may go along with it, and we may receive the Benefit he designs us in it.

Our

Our Feet must be wash'd, before we Vol. II.
approach that Holy Table, our Affections Purify'd, and our Souls cleans'd by Godly Sorrow, from those Defilements we have contracted by our Evil Conversation. Our Faith must work by Love, and be attended with *Meekness, Temperance, Patience, Brotherly-kindness, and Charity* which covers a multitude of Faults, and *is the fulfilling of the Christian Law.*

And our intentions too must be Pure, and Uncorrupt, such as become the Gospel of Christ, and will be approv'd of by the great Master of this Heavenly Feast, who knows our Hearts. That is, with sincere Devotion, and Joy, and Praise, and Gratitude, to dedicate our selves intirely to his Service; that so we may receive the happy Influences of his presence in our Souls, and become *one with him, and he with us*, and thereby enabled to continue faithful to him, to the last moment of our Lives.

But he that partakes of those sacred Mysteries, to serve the vile Designs of Ambition, and Avarice, and as a *Blind* to conceal the base Intrigues of Hypocrisie; is got into the way of *Judas*, and is a Traytor, not a Disciple. And let him.

Vol. II. him have a care, lest Satan enter into him with the Morsel which he eats to such wicked Purposes, and bring him to the Portion of that miserable Wretch, who of all Men living, had the greatest reason to curse the Day of his Birth.

'Twould be very happy if effectual care was taken, to prevent this evil Practice, which is now but too common, and likewise justify'd, which makes it worse; whereas nothing can tend more to the dishonour of our great Master, and his Holy Religion, nor is more destructive of the Publick Good, and also of the best, the eternal Interest of those that are guilty of so great a piece of Mockery; which is too manifestly so, to admit of any tolerable Plea or Defence.

Wherefore let us All take up David's Resolution, Psal. 26. 6. *I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine Altar.* And may the very God of peace sanctify us wholly, so that our whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, may be preserv'd blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen. Amen.

1 Thess. 5.
3.

Practical OBSERVATIONS Vol. II.

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

X.

Our Saviour's last Sufferings
and Death.

MATT. 26. 36, 37, 38, 39, &c.

Then cometh Jesus with his Disciples unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto them, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter, and the two Sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful, and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, my Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death; tarry ye here and watch with me.

Z

And

Vol. II. *And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and pray'd, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

UPON so copious a Subject as the last Sufferings and Death of our blessed Redeemer, all that can be done in so narrow a compass as I have allotted for these Observations is briefly to lay the Story together, and give some short hints as we go along to be improv'd by every one's own Meditations.

Now after our Lord had eaten his last Passover with his Disciples and instituted his Holy Supper, or a Sacramental Remembrance to be perpetually observ'd in his Church, of his bitter Sufferings and Death, which then were just at Hand; with a noble Resolution we find him going to meet those who he knew were coming to betray him to them. And when 'twas late in the Evening, he walk'd with his Disciples to a Garden in *Gethsemane*, discoursing all the way upon that mournful Subject; and the gloominess of the Night, we may suppose, was an acci-

accidental Addition to the horror of Vol. II. that dismal Scene, and affected his Imagination with black Ideas of the Storm that was so suddainly to break upon him.

And when he was come to the Place, *Lu. 22. 39.* where he frequently us'd to spend his Hours in sweetest Intercourse with *Joh. 18. 2.* his Heavenly Father by Prayer and Holy Meditation; he left his Disciples, as his custom was, when he intended to retire to his Devotions, and went into the Garden at some distance from them, but took with him *Peter, James and John*, that he might not be wholly alone in a time of so much Trouble, and bid them tarry there and watch with him, while he should Pray; and then advanc'd still forward, and his Soul being *exceeding sorrowful, and sore amaz'd, and very heavy, even unto death,* ready to sink under the intolerable load of the Sins of the whole World, and his Fathers fiercest Wrath by reason of them, (and were we so sensible of this as we should be, we likewise in some measure should be affected as he was) *He fell on his face, and pray'd, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but*

Vol. II. *as thou wilt!* And what sad apprehensions think we, must he needs have of what was coming upon him, when in so pathetick a manner with Arms extended, and in the posture of the most humble Suppliant, he express'd the agony his Soul was in, and with the most earnest importunity, begg'd of his Father, that if 'twas possible, that is, consistent with the design he had laid for Man's Salvation, that dreaded Cup might be remov'd, and he excus'd from drinking it: Tho' at the same time he shew'd the most intire resignation and submission to his Heavenly Will, as we should do in every Instance of Trouble and Affliction, that God shall please to exercise us with.

Vide Light-foot Hor.

Heb. in

Luke 22.

43.

Luke 4.13.

Some think the Devil then appear'd to him in the most horrid frightful Shapes, and surrounded him with all his Terrors, if possible to make his Spirits sink, and render him dejected in his Sufferings; this being the *Season*, till which we are told he left him, after his shameful Repulse in the Wilderness; and now was resolv'd to reck his utmost Malice and Revenge upon him. And possibly it may be so, for we read he order'd his Disciples to *watch* with him,

him, and came to them more than Vol.II.
once, hoping to receive some little *Luke 22.*
Comfort and Refreshment from them; ^{45.}
but finding them *asleep*, as stupefy'd
with their excessive trouble for him,
and himself alone in the midst of hellish
Fiends insulting over him, he again
had recourse to his Prayers, (the best
Cordial in all Affliction, and which
will give new Spirits to us when all
other Comforts fail;) and then, as
there was great need, *There appear'd un-*
to him an Angel from Heaven strengthening
him, as there did before in the Wilder-
ness, and obliging the Spirits of Dark-
ness to depart.

But notwithstanding this, so great
was his Agony, that he pray'd still
more earnestly, and Sweat as it were large *John 18.*
groomy drops of Blood, falling down to the ^{11.}
Ground, tho' it was in a cold Season,
in the open Air, and in the Night;
which was a sad foreboding of the great
effusion of his Hearts Blood, that was
soon to follow.

And no sooner was he a little come
to himself, and had given his Disciples
a kind warning of *their* approaching
Danger, as well as his, and advis'd
them to Watch and Pray against the
Tempta-

Vol. II. Temptations, the severe Tryals they should shortly be exercis'd with ; but the Traitor *Judas*, entred the Garden at the head of a numerous Rabble, and a band of Soldiers, arm'd with Swords and Staves, to take him by force, if he should make Resistance, and furnish'd with Lanthorns and Torches to seek him out, if he should endeavour to hide himself from them, and whisper'd to them a sign whereby they should know certainly which was he, and then conducted them to the Place, where he knew he us'd to be at his Devotions.

But the innocent Jesus, instead of flying from, came boldly forward to meet those that thirsted for his Blood, like a harmless Lamb going into the very Paws of a Lion ; and when he saw his treacherous Servant *Judas* making towards him, with wonderfull Meekness, he mildly ask'd him, tho' he knew his Business before hand, *Friend wherefore art thou Come?* And then the Villain, with such a hardned Resolution, as nothing could make to relent, greeted him in a seeming Respectfull friendly way, and said *hail Master, Master, and kiss'd Him.* To this

this, all the return the meek Jesus Vol.II. made, was only these few words, *Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of man with a Kiss?* Which yet, as few and gentle as they were would have made a deep Impression in any Heart but his; and it may be, began to awaken *his wretched* Soul into such a sense of the Unparalell'd Guilt, and Baseness of that action as in a short time after grew too heavy for him to bear: and so it is with every obstinate sinner, one time or other, in proportion to the degree of his Wickedness.

Now when the Soldiers had receiv'd the sign, and knew which was the Person they were to apprehend, they advanc'd, to seize him; and as they drew near, Jesus asked them, *whom seek ye?* They said *Jesus of Nazareth*, he answered, *I am he*; and as he spake, something appear'd so Great, so Majestick, so Divine in him, that they were struck with such awe and amazement as they could not bear up against; and immediately drew back, and fell to the *John 18.6.* Ground as if they came to adore him rather than to take him Prisoner. And as they lay thus prostrate before him, tho' he might easily have then escap'd

Z 4

their

Vol. II. their hands, yet he again asks them but in a more *familiar Way*, that they might so far recover themselves as to be able to do what they were sent for, (*so willingly did Jesus suffer for us!*) *Whom seek ye?* And they again made a shift to tell him; and he once more acknowledg'd himself to be the man they sought; and intimated his readiness to surrender himself to them, only desir'd them since twas him they came for, to let his Disciples escape; *if ye seek me, let these go their way*: so tender was he of every ones safety but his own, as knowing that the Eternal Safety of all the World depended upon his Sufferings and Death. And when they were ready to lay hands on him, *Peter* being rous'd by what Jesus had said to him a little before when he found him asleep, *Couldst not thou watch with me one Hour?* Thou that wouldst Dye with me, Couldst thou not break thy rest for me a little? Being rous'd by that gentle Reproof he drew his Sword, and began to attempt his Masters Rescue, *and smote the High Priests servant, and cut off his right ear.* But our Lord who had before commanded them to *love even their Enemies and do good to them*

John 18.
10.

Mat. 44. 5.

them that hate them, now shew'd by his Vol. II.
own Example that twas Practiable, Matt. 5.
how hard soever they might think it; 44.
and immediately with admirable Cha-
rity he touch'd his Ear and heal'd him.
 And then to teach a lesson of submissi-
 on to lawful Authority, tho' it were
 sometimes made use of to Purposes that
 could not be justify'd; he rebuk'd St.
 Peter's over heat and forwardness, and
 bid him *put up his Sword again into the* Matt. 26.
sheath, and told him with all, that those 52.
that took the sword in hand to oppose the
Power of the Magistrate, should perish
with the Sword. And to shew him that
 he was a willing Prisoner, according to
 what he had said before, *No man taketh* John 10.
my Life from me but I lay it down of my 18.
self; and could soon be at liberty if he
 pleased, without his help; he ask'd him,
Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my — 53.
Father, and he shall presently give me more
than 12 Legions of Angells? But how
then shall the Scriptures be fulfill'd that
thus it must be? And besides, the Cup — 54.
which my Father hath given me shall I not
drink it? shall I shun what God has de-
creed for me, and is so conducive to his
Glory, and the Eternal Happiness of
Mankind, that I may consult my own
Per-

Vol. II. Personal Ease and Safety! So mean spirited, so undutifull, so selfish, so dishonourable a thing as this, the Blessed Jesus scorn'd, and quietly deliverd himself up into their Power. And *they took*
John 18. *him and bound him;* The rude Soldiers
 12. Sacrilegiously girding with cruel Cords those healing Hands which never yet were us'd but to do good, as if they fear'd a mischief from him: when all the while his Love to Sinners, and even to those that treated him so hardly, held him faster than all the Bands that they could lay upon Him.

But how uncomfortable a sight was it to him, when upon his apprehension, his Disciples, even his bosom Favourite, *all forsook him and fled!* When he was left to the Mercy of those from whom he could expect no favour but all the cruelty that exasperated Malice could inflict! And thus deserted as he was by his most intimate Friends, in his greatest necessity, he was led away in a barbarous kind of Triumph.

Let us now, with St. Peter, whose Fear kept him at a great distance, but whose Love would not suffer him wholly to forsake his Master, let us now follow the *Divine Prisoner* into the high Priest's Palace, where

where he was insulted by the Soldiers Vol. II.
 most Inhumanly, and whither he
 was dragg'd like a heinous Offender to
 the Barr. And when he was there,
 how industrious were they to stubborn
 false Witnesses against him; with what
 Heat and Spite, tho' without any Proof
 did they malign and accuse him! While
 he, like Innocence itself, stood silently be-
 fore them, unmov'd with any Passion
 but of Love and Pity; not at all sollici-
 tous to clear himself of Imputations,
 which he knew would contradict each
 other, and therefore soon fall of them-
 selves; but *as a sheep before the shearers*
is dumb, so opened he not his mouth. Isai. 53. 7.

When the High Priest saw this, which
 was a great disappointment to him,
 having hopes to pick something out
 of the Defence Jesus should make for
 himself, to urge against him; he rose
 up from his Seat, with Rage and Ma-
 lice in his Face, and fiercely ask'd him,
Answerest thou nothing? What is it which Mat. 26.
these witness against thee? 62. 63.
 As if some Mark 14.
 horrid Crimes had been prov'd upon 60. 61.
 him, which yet were no Body knew
 what; but Jesus remain'd still silent,
 patient, and meek, as if needing no
 other plea but his own Innocence,
 which

Vol. II. which was known to all Men. St. John indeed says, that he made Answer to the High Priest when *he ask'd him of his Disciples and his Doctrine*, but that was after he had been led from *Annas* (who was not properly the High Priest but an Assistant to him) to *Caiaphas*, who was actually in that high Station; only he was carry'd first to *Annas* for the respect that was due to him as the High Priest's Father-in-law. So that his *silence* was before *Annas*, who had no great matter of Authority lodg'd in him; but when *Caiaphas* question'd him, he shew'd the regard that was due to the lawful Magistrate and said, *I spake openly to the World, I ever Taught in the Synagogue and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing, why askest thou me? Ask them which heard what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said.* But this generous Appeal of his was so displeasing to one of the High Priests Officers which stood by, that he struck Jesus with the Rod or Cane that he had in his hand, *Saying Answerest thou the High Priest so? And who should this be, but, as some think, Malchus; whose Ear Jesus had but just before heal'd when*
Peter

Peter had cut it off; and that Ingratitude of his was so highly resented by our Blessed Lord, who hated every thing of so base a Nature, that he made a quicker reply than was usual with him, and said, *If I have spoken Evil, bear witness of the Evil*; now is the time, you have a fair Opportunity, and make the best use of it you can, for there are enough that would be glad of any material Allegation against me: *But if not, if I have said nothing, as I have not, that is any thing amiss, why smitest THOU ME?* Why shouldest thou of all Men treat me thus injuriously, who have lately shewn so much Charity and Goodness to thee, and that in so extraordinary a manner, as should make thee a Convert rather than so fierce an Enemy. And therefore 'tis plain, that tho' our Holy Religion does oblige us to forgive our Enemies, and to pray for those that despightfully use us and persecute us; yet it does not oblige us to take no notice of what is ungratefull, and abusive and injurious; for our great and good Master had such Resentments we see, tho' they wore off presently with infinite Charity and Forgiveness, and so they should with us.

But

John 18.
23.

Vol. II. But the High Priest, designing to en-
snare him, and condemn him out of his
own Mouth; took the most effectual
Course to make him speak Freely and
with out reserve, and said unto him,
I adjure thee by the living God, that thou
tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the son
of the living God! And then, out of re-
verence to that Adjuration, which
with the Jews was held most sacred,
and the Person so Adjur'd, obliged as
by the most solem Oath to speak the
Truth; he frankly and openly pro-
fess'd, what it highly concern'd both
Caiaphas, and all the World to know
and believe, and with Courage exem-
plary to all Ages of the Church, said
what he knew they watch'd for, and
would cost him his life: I am what
Thou hast said. And that his Answer
might make the deeper impression upon
those that were present, and others to
whom it should be reported, he add's
nevertheless, or as despicable as I now
appear, as great a Criminal as I am re-
presented to be, *I say unto you, hereaf-*
ter ye shall see the son of man sitting on the
right hand of power, and coming in the
clouds of heaven; then to call you to
Judgement who are now my Judges
and Accusers.

Mat. 26.
63.

—46.

Upon

Upon this, the High Priest, in token Vol. II. of his abominating such Blasphemy, as he would have it, *rent his clothes*, and immediately taking advantage of what Jesus had said, drew the Net over him which before he had spread for him, and tells the People that he had spoken *Blasphemy*; asks them *what further need of witness?* Appeals to their own Ears for the certainty of the thing, *behold, now ye have heard his Blasphemy!* And then requires the Opinion of his malicious Assessors the *Scribes* and *Pharises*, *what think ye?* And they with full cry answer, *He is guilty of death.* And thus was perfect Innocence condemn'd, by Men whose own iniquities were as red as Scarlet, and never to be wash'd away but by the Blood of that (as they call'd him) impious Blasphemer.

After this, how shamefully was he abus'd by the inferiour Rabble! who spit in his very Face, which tho' broken with Sorrow and Affliction, yet was always full of a majestick Sweetness; and then in abominable Mockery and barbarous Sport, *blindfolded and buffeted him*, and in derision bid him *if he was the Christ, to Prophecy or tell who 'twas that smote him.* Lord, what indignities

Vol. II. indignities are these to be offerd to the Son of God, the King of Glory, and with what admirable Meekness and Patience did he bear them! Well might he say, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*; and that of the Prophet *Isaiah* was then fulfill'd to a Tittle, *his visage was so marr'd more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men*; *he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, he witheld not his face from shame and spitting. He was despis'd and Rejected of men, afflicted and oppress'd yet he open'd not his Mouth. And was all this, and more, much more than this for me! For such a Wretch as Me! O wondrous and unfathomable Love and Goodness! All Praise and Love and Blessing, O most Compassionate Je- be return'd to thee!*

Isa. 52.

14.

52.—6.

53.—37.

Let us now follow this Man of Sorrows into the Palace of the Roman Governour, *Pilate*,—to whom the *Jews* hal'd Him to crave Sentence of Death against him, (the Power of inflicting capital Punishments being then taken from them) that he might suffer the most shameful, and cruel Death they could think of, which was Crucifixion.

And

And here, behold him in the midst Vol. II.
of his Accusers, represented to Pilate *Luke 23.*
as the worst of Men, a fellow that per-^{1.}
verted the Nation and forbade giving tri-
bute to Caesar, saying that he himself was
Christ a King: An accusation which
they thought Pilate was oblig'd to take
more than ordinary Notice of, and vin-
dicate his Masters Sovereignty by
severely punishing this bold Invader of
it. Tho' the thing was so utterly false,
that Jesus had before publickly acknow-
ledg'd it to be lawful to pay Tribute
to their then Roman Governours; and
when they shew'd him the Tribute
Mony stamp'd with Caesars Image, he
said, *Render to Caesar the things that are*
Caesars. And as for his being a King
when Pilate Examined him upon that
Head, tho' he own'd that he was so,
yet he told him withal that his King-
dom was not of this World, and so, no *John 18.*
Encroachment upon Caesars Prerogative,^{36.}
or Injury to his Title. Which answer,
together with his mild harmless Aspect
and sedate compos'd Behaviour, and
Silence, amidst all the fierce Calumnies
of the Jewes against him; so well satis-
fy'd Pilate of his Innocence, that he
Declar'd to them *He found no fault in*
A a him:

Vo. II. *him*: only when he heard that being of
Luke 23. *Galilee* he belong'd to *Herods* Jurisdic-
7. tion, as a means to oblige him and make
up an old difference between them,
he sends *Jesus* to *Herod* who was then
at *Jerusalem* by reason of the Feast.
Then was this Lamb of God hurry'd
thro' a crowd of Spectators, flouting
and deriding him as he went,
and closely follow'd by his spite-
full Adversaries, till at length he was
brought before *Herod*; who having
heard so much of his Fame, was ex-
ceeding glad when he saw him, and
hop'd he should see some Miracle done
by him. But when, *after he had*
question'd him in many words, (being for-
merly Jealous of him as his Rival in
the Kingdom) and endeavour'd to pump
something out of him that might give
him Light into his Deligns and enable
him to find out his Accomplices, and
the like, but receiv'd no Answer: he
then began to abuse and set at nought
him who before he was afraid of; and
his Soldiers mock'd him, and array'd
him in a gorgeous Robe to render him
the more Contemptible to the Multi-
tude, and expose him for saying he
was a King. And in this Pageantry they
led

led him back again to *Pilate* thro' numerous Flouts and Taunts, and mock Respects to this ridiculous King; his Enemies upbraiding him, his Friends afraid to own him, and nothing but his Innocence, and the Prospect of the happy end of his Sufferings, to support and comfort him. Where when he was arriv'd, like the hunted Prey of a Lion faint and almost spent, his Enemies thirsty for his Blood, and he ready to submit; *Pilate* being thoroughly satisfy'd of his Innocence, (which he thrice declar'd) and the Malice of his Accusers; endeavour'd, with a gentle Correction, (hoping that might satisfy them) to release him. And in compliance with a Custom they had of releasing a Prisoner at that Feast in remembrance of their deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*, he propos'd Jesus to them as the Man, and gave them the choise of either him or *Barabbas*, who for Sedition and Murder had been cast into Prison; supposing, as we may charitably believe, that Jesus, in comparison with so vile an Offender would be thought to deserve their Favour best. But for all this, with hellish and implacable Malice, they prefer *Barabbas*

Vol. II. before Jesus ; and altogether cry out *away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him.* And when Pilate again ask'd, *why, what evil hath he done?* They cry'd out the more exceedingly, *crucify him.* And when upon this, he wash'd his Hands in token of his being Innocent of the Blood of *that just Person*, as he stil'd him, and bid them see to it; (enough one would think to startle the most Resolute among them) they all with the most confirm'd and settled Malice, answer'd, *his Blood be on us, and on our Children!* Lord what devillish Spite was this ! To pursue so eagerly to the Death, one that they must needs know was Innocent, and then to imprecate the guilt of his Blood-shed upon themselves and their posterity ! And may his Blood be upon them, to their Pardon and Forgiveness, for nothing else but that can wash away their guilt ! After this, when Pilate to appease their fury, if possible, without consenting that he should be Crucify'd, had caus'd him to be Scourg'd, and the Soldiers in Mockery had platted a Crown of Thorns and put it about his Head, and put on him a Purple Robe, and a Reed in his right Hand instead of a Scepter, and
with

with intolerable Derision bow'd the Vol. II.

Knee before him, and said, *Hail King of the Jews*, and then immediately spit on him, and with his mock Scepter smote him on the Head, which made his Thorny Crown Pierce deep into his Sacred Temples: he brought him forth again to them in that cruel piece of Mockery, declaring still his Innocence, and said, *Behold the Man*; a sight able to move Compassion in the most flinty Breast. As if *Pilate* should have thus bespoke them. 'Behold this Man, whom as a 'Notorious Criminal you have accus'd; 'tho' I must think him Innocent, yet 'for your Satisfaction us'd in a manner 'severe enough for a great Offence. 'Behold him, with his Body torn 'with Scourges, the blowes laid on 'by such as are not us'd to spare for 'cries and mournful Accents. Be- 'hold him, for his calling himself 'a *King*, array'd in this mock Resem- 'blance of Royalty, whereby he is ex- 'pos'd to the derision of this numerous 'Assembly; and as for his *Crown*, be- 'hold the Materials of which 'tis made, 'no better than sharp Thorns which 'gore him to the quick, and all the Jew- 'els that adorn it, are those large

A a 3 drops

Vol. II. ‘ drops of Blood, which you see trickle down around his Head and Face
 ‘ in great abundance. Behold this
 ‘ miserable Man, behold him and relent!

But all this would not do, still they cry out *Crucify him Crucify him*; and boldly tell *Pilate* if *thou let this man go thou art not Cæsars friend, whosoever maketh himself a King speaketh against Cæsar*. Upon which, and to appease the uproar which then was very great, *Pilate* sat down upon the Judgment-seat to pass the sentence of Crucifixion upon Jesus; but once more presented him to them in that sad condition, to try if possible, to move their Pity, saying, *Behold your King!* But they Cry’d out still louder *Crucify him*; and then he deliver’d him to them, and with much insulting and barbarous Joy, they took him and led him away.

John 19.
12.

—13.
—14.

And now let us follow him to Mount *Calvary*, and behold the Conclusion of this wondrous Tragedy. But before they led him thither, they stripp’d him of his mock Royal attire, all but the Crown of Thorns, which their inhuman Cruelty would not ease him of, and then immediately hurry’d him
 away

away, that he might be Crucify'd be- Vol. II.
fore their *Sabbath*, which was next
day; (their malicious Rage not brook-
ing so long a delay as till the next day
after it) and while they use him thus,
how silent and how patient was he, not
the least unseemly Word breaking from
him amidst all these Barbarites, but
with a mild tho' Sorrowfull Counte-
nance he was willing to comply with
every thing. *He was not rebellious as* *Isa. 50.*
Isaiah expresses it, *neither turn'd away*
back; no signs of fury or impatience, or
so much as the least offer to escape; he *42.—2.*
did neither Cry nor strive, nor was his
voice heard in the streets, when he was re-
vil'd he revil'd not again, when he suf-
fer'd he threatned not, but committed him-
self to him that judgeth righteously. *1 Pet. 2.*

And as he was going to the Place of
Execution, to *Golgotha*, or *Calvary*, that
is, the *Place of a Scull*, where the Bones
of Criminals that had there been put to
Death, were scattered about, when
the Graves where they had been bury'd
were open'd to make room for others;
faint as he was, and quite tir'd out, and
thro' the Pain of his torn Sides and
wounded Temples ready to sink to the
ground without any further load; they

Vol. II. inhumanly oppress'd him with the Weight of part of his Cross, as was the *Roman* Custom, and thus was he forc'd on, up a steep Hill, till at length 'twas found he would expire unless reliev'd, and their Malice not allowing him so easy a kind of Death, they compel one more able, to bear it for him, that his Life might be tortur'd from him by the exquisite Pains of Crucifixion; so very cruel was this their shew of Mercy.

And thus in the midst of a crowd of People, some insulting and triumphing over him, and others bewailing and lamenting him, he was led on like a Lamb to the Slaughter, and with infinite Charity seem'd more concern'd for the Miseries that were coming upon that wicked Nation than for his own, and turn'd and said to those that bemoan'd him, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves and for your children.*

Luke 23.
28.

And when he was come Fainting and Panting, to the top of the fatal Place; the Executioners with officious Diligence apply themselves to make ready his Cross, and bring out the Hammer and the Nails, that were to fasten him to it; the Soldiers in the mean time stripping

stripping off his Raiment, but leaving Vol. II, on his Crown of Thorns; whilst his Friends, the Pious Women that attended him, mingled a Cordial for him of *Wine and Myrrh*, both to support his dying Spirits, and as a *Narcotick* stupefying Draught, to make him the less sensible of his Pain, which was sometimes provided by charitable Persons upon such occasions. But that he might suffer all that his Enemies could Inflict, since 'twas for us he Suffer'd, and in the full use of his *Reason* resign up his Soul to God (as who that considers what *Dying* is, but would desire to do!) he refus'd, and would not drink it.

All things being thus in a readiness, his Back looking as if it were Plough'd with long furrows by the merciless Lashes that had before been given him, and his Face besmear'd with Sweat and the Soldiers Spittle, and the Blood that ran down from his wounded Temples; in this forlorn condition, they laid him upon his Cross with his Arms extended, and his Leggs stretched out to their utmost length, and then they nail'd him to it, thro' his Hands and feet, the most nervous and sensible parts of the Body, and hoisted it up and placed it
in

Vol. II. in a hole they had digg'd for it, which with the fall and settling into it gave a most tormenting Shock to his Body that hung with all its weight upon four Wounds; while he with wondrous Charity, Pray'd for these his Murderers saying, *Father forgive them they know not what they do.*

Lu. 23. 24.

And whilst he was thus hanging in inexpressible Torment between two Thieves that were Crucify'd with him, as if the most execrable Villain of the three, whereby was fulfill'd that Prophecy of *Isaiah*, *He was numbred with the transgressors*; the Soldiers underneath being busied in parting his Raiment among them, and casting Lots for his seamless Coat, that another place of Scripture might be accomplished, which saith, *They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots*: Some of the People that stood by gazing upon this sad Sight, pass'd by the Cross, and wagg'd their heads at him in a deriding way, and said, *Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thy self, and if thou be the son of God, come down from the Cross*; and some of the Chief Priests were there too, to see sure Work made of

Isa. 53. 12.

Pf. 22. 18.

of him, and they likewise mock'd him, Vol. II. saying one to another, (and loud enough no doubt for him to hear them,) *He saved others, himself he cannot save, let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the Cross that we may see and believe.* And one of those that were Crucify'd with him revil'd him too, *And railing on him said, if thou be the Christ, save thy self and us.* But the other, by our Saviour's patient Suffering, and wonderfully Meek and Charitable Behaviour, was made a happy Convert to him, and rebuk'd the vile Tongue of his Fellow, confessing his own just Punishment, and that Jesus *had done nothing amiss*; and said to him with great Strength and sincerity of Faith, *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!* Which our Lord was pleas'd to reward with a promise of his being with him that very Day in Paradise, the blissful Region of good departed Spirits; to encourage the sincere, tho' late Repentance of a Sinner.

At length, having recommended his Holy Mother to the care of his favourite Disciple, and hung three long Hours in most exquisite Torture, calmly bearing the Taunts and Flouts of the

Luke 23.
39, &c.

John 9.
26, 27.

Vol. II. the inhumane Spectators, and quite sunk with Pain, and the effusion of so much Blood; being just upon the point of expiring, he cry'd out in a most bitter agony of Soul, (to shew what we should have felt, and shall still feel, if we die with Consciences oppress'd with loads of guilt,) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Why hast thou suspended thy usual Comforts from me, and left me thus to the Mercy of the powers of Darkness, and the unrestrain'd cruelty of devillish Men!

Upon which, some of the By-standers, either ignorantly or wilfully, (most probably the latter,) mistaking his Words as if he call'd for *Elias* to take him down, said, *let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him:* and then, as in a Fever thro' excess of Pain, *He said I thirst;* whereupon, one more maliciously Officious than the rest, ran and dipp'd a *Sponge in Vinegar*, (set there as 'tis thought, to stop the too violent effusion of Blood and lengthen out the Malefactors Misery by making them die the more slowly) and to make it the more nauseous and offensive, mingled it with *Gall*, and apply'd it to the Mouth of Jesus upon the top of a Reed, that

that he might suck so ungrateful a mixture as was *Vinegar and Gall*; an apt resemblance of the consequence of Sin. Which when Jesus had tasted, (tho' he would not taste the Cordial of Wine and Myrrh that was prepar'd for him by his Friends, as we observ'd before) feeling the Pangs of Death come upon him, *He cry'd with a loud voice it is finish'd*, and then bow'd his head, and said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, and gently gave up the Ghost. Upon which the gazing Multitude, who are not often much affected with the misfortunes of others, *Smote their Breasts and return'd*, and the Centurion that guarded him, said, *He was the Son of God*.

And now, upon a review of this sad, this wondrous Scene; may we not say with the Prophet Jerimy, *Behold and see, was ever any sorrow like to our Saviour's* Lam. 1. 12 *sorrow, or any love like his! Greater love than this hath no man, saith our Lord, than that a man lay down his life for his friend*; what shall we say of that Love then, that amazing Goodness and Compassion of the great Redeemer of Mankind, who while we were his *Enemies*, obstinate and irreclaimable, thus dy'd

Vol. II. dy'd and suffer'd for us, to rescue us from the miseries of Eternal Death! 'Tis an astonishing Miracle of Mercy, and none could be thus Divinely Good, but God!

Thus was the Blessed Jesus made a *willing* Sacrifice for Sinners! And while he suffer'd, what a strange *Darkness* cover'd the Face of Heaven; and such a preternatural and total eclipse of the Sun for full three Hours together, as was extreamly surprizing to every Body, and taken notice of with great admiration by several Heathen Writers of that time! To shew the dismal State the World was in, till Jesus had appeas'd his Father's Anger by his Death! And then, *The veil of the temple* which separated the Holy of Holies, from the view and access of the People, and into which none was to enter but the High Priest once a Year, *was rent from the top to the bottom*; to signify, that by that meritorious Death and Passion of *His*, way was made for all the World that would believe in, and obey him, to come freely to the Throne of Grace, and receive the greatest Expressions of God's Favour and Blessing in this World; and that admission was procur'd

cur'd for his faithful Servants into that Vol. II.
most Holy and Happy Place which is
above. And the Graves being open'd
when he said it is finish'd, and the Bo-
dies of many Saints that slept, arising out
of them soon after, shews his intire
Conquest over Death, and that it shall
be the Gate of everlasting Life to those
that die in him.

And if the *only*, the eternally belov-
ed Son of God, suffer'd such bitter things
as we have seen, and was made a Man
of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief,
when he represented sinful Mankind,
and took our Punishment upon him;
what a Notion should this give us of
the exceeding Guilt of Sin; how infi-
nitely hateful 'tis to the Holy God, and
what inexpressible Misery it would
have brought upon us, had not the most
Compassionate Jesus aton'd for it with
his most precious Blood !

Had he not *Born* our griefs, and car-
ry'd the sorrows due to us; had he not
been *Wounded* for our transgressions, and
bruised for our sins; had not the Iniqui-
ty of us all been laid upon him, which he
bore in his own body on the tree; and had
we not been healed by his Stripes, and
redeem'd from the Sentence of eternal
Death

Vol. II. Death by the meritorious Sacrifice of himself, as a Lamb without Spot and Blemish: The intolerable weight would have sunk us to the lowest Hell.

He therefore that beholds our Lord in his Agony, and Crown'd with Thorns, and Bleeding, fainting and expiring upon a Cross, and remembers that 'twas the Sins of the World which brought all this Misery upon him, and provok'd his Heavenly Father thus severely to *Afflict him in the day of his fierce anger* against his Rebellious Creatures, whom the Blessed Jesus in infinite Charity was pleas'd to Personate and Represent; needs no other argument to demonstrate, the great Malignity of Sin, and how odious 'tis to God; nor can there be a stronger motive to incline us to keep at the utmost distance from every the least appearance of this greatest of Evils, than to consider that nothing could expiate or atone for it, but the Blood of the Son of God.

For, can an obstinate Sinner think to escape the just Judgment of God, when the Holy Jesus suffer'd such things when he appear'd in the stead of sinfull Mankind? Is Sin *less* displeasing to God

God now, than it was then; or has the Vol. II.
Death of Christ purchas'd a liberty of
doing with impunity what God infi-
nitely hates, and for which as in our
room, his well beloved Son was Cruci-
fy'd?

Who can be so forsaken of Reason as
to entertain such Thoughts as these?
And therefore, let us not deceive our
selves, for tho' Christ has once suffer'd
for us, the Just for the Unjust, and re-
concil'd us to his Father by his Death,
and put our life again into our Hands,
which was before forfeited to the Di-
vine Vengeance, and given us a new
opportunity of providing for a happy
Eternity; yet if we again Sin wilfully,
and persist in it, *there is no more Sacrifice*
for sin, and even the Blood of Christ
which was once shed for us, will be of
no avail to us, but we must bear our
Guilt and our Punishment our selves,
to all Eternity.

And how great, how amazing is the
Goodness of God and Jesus, in taking
Pity upon such vile undeserving
Wretches as we were, and in so won-
derful a manner bringing about our Re-
demption! What a Blessed change is
there now made in our Circumstances!

Vol. II. Of what infinite Efficacy were the Wounds! How wondrously cleansing and healing was the Blood! How mighty the Conquests! How glorious the Triumphs, of our once despis'd Crucify'd Redeemer! How has he led Captivity Captive, spoil'd Principalities and Powers, disarm'd Death, broke thro' the Bars of the Grave, and rescu'd many Myriads from the very Gates of Hell!

Who but a *God-Man* could do all this? What other Sacrifice but his, would have been accepted, for the Sins of the whole World? Who but this Divine Champion, could have been so mighty to save, and have *trod the wine press of God's wrath alone*, and with his own arm brought salvation to the people? *Isa. 63.* 'Tis Indeed a Miraculous Deliverance, and infinitely above the reach of all created Beings to effect; but what is too hard for Omnipotence? What is of greater value, than the Blood of the Son of God, and what Anger so great as not to be appeas'd by the oblation of such a Sacrifice? What Justice so rigorous as not to be satisfy'd by such an Expiation? And what Soul so foul, so tainted, and polluted, but may, by being wash'd in the Blood of Jesus, be made pure

pure and clean enough to approach to, Vol. II.
and be accepted of, even the most Holy
God!

Before our Saviour's Sufferings for us, the whole World was under God's Curse, and doom'd to Eternal Misery with the Devil and his Angels, and like so many condemn'd Criminals ready for Execution, when that great Judge should give the fatal Summons; but *now*, we are as so many happy Men that have receiv'd a Pardon, and are included in a gracious Act of Oblivion, upon condition of our better Life for the future; or like ransom'd Slaves, restor'd to Liberty and Ease only upon this most reasonable Condition, that we would pay a sincere and intire Obedience to our great Deliver, whose service is perfect Freedom.

Nay more of condemn'd Miscreants, and miserable Slaves to the infernal Tyrant, we are now become adopted into the Family of God himself; are call'd his *Sons*, and as such, have glorious Mansions and Inheritances assign'd us in his Heavenly Kingdom.

Now can any Man be so stupidly insensible of this happy alteration in his condition, as not to be all over Love

Vol. II. and Praise, and Gratitude, to the Blessed Author of all this? Can he think much to dedicate his whole self to his Service, who has done and suffer'd such wondrous things for *him*?

Would stubborn Disobedience be a fit return for so much Love? Would it become a Christian to entertain and cherish those Vices that betray'd his Saviour into the Hands of his Bloody Enemies, and at last tortur'd him to Death?

How much rather does it become us to die unto Sin, to *Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*; and to follow the steps of our ever Blessed Redeemer in all Holiness of Life! In Charity and Beneficence, in Meekness and Humility, In forgiveness of Injuries and love of Enemies, in Patience and submission to the Divine Will, under all Troubles and Afflictions, in Courage and Constancy in the severest Trials for the sake of God and his Truth, even to the last extremity!

This would be to carry about with us both in our Bodies and Spirits the genuine Marks and Signatures of the Lord Jesus, whereby we shall be known to be his; and having been thus conformable
to

to him in our Lives, and in our Death, Vol. II. we shall in due time be made like him in the Glories of a happy Resurrection to a most blissful Life; where Sin and Suffering, and Sorrow and Pain, and all the inconveniences of Mortality, shall be no more for Ever.

Thus is the Death and Passion of our Saviour, the Ground of all our Hopes; and will be of infinite Advantage to us, if we comply with the great design of it, in being Freed from the power of Sin, and engag'd in the sincere Practice of Evangelical Righteousness. For therefore *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

*Tit. 2.
14.*

Wherefore to conclude; tho' the preaching of Christ crucify'd, be to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness, yet to us 'tis the highest Exaltation of the power, and wisdom and goodness of God:

And Jesus is thereby made unto us wisdom, *Cor. 1. 1.* and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Let him then that glorieth, glory in his crucify'd Lord, by whom the world is crucify'd to him, and he unto the world. *Galat. 6.* Amen! Blessed Jesus, Amen! *14.*

Vol. II. PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

XI.

Our Saviour's miraculous Resurrection from the Dead.

LUKE 24. 5, 6, 7.

*Why seek ye the living among the Dead ?**He is not here, but is risen ; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,**Saying, the son of man must be deliver'd into the hands of sinful men, and be crucify'd, and the third day rise again.*

Soon after our Blessed Lord had yielded up his innocent Soul into the Hands of his Heavenly Father, and had

had finish'd his Sufferings by his death; Vol. II. it being the Day of the preparation for the Feast of the Passover, which then fell upon the Sabbath, and made it a Day of greater Solemnity than ordinary; the Jews had besought *Pilate* that the Bodies of those that were Executed might be taken down from their Crosses and so sad a Spectacle not remain in Peoples View, at a time of so great rejoicing. And lest they should not be quite dead, and revive and make their escape, they desir'd their Leggs might be broken; the Pain of which would either hasten their Death, or at least secure 'em from getting away.

Accordingly the Soldiers came and broke the Leggs of the two Malefactors that were Crucify'd with Jesus, but when they were about to do the like to *him* perceiving that he was thoroughly Dead, they desisted; whereby a Prophecy concerning him was fulfill'd, which said, *a bone of him shall not be broken*, and that injunction of not Breaking any Bone of the Paschal Lamb, which was a lively Type of our Saviour, remarkably observ'd. *Exod. 12. 46.*

But to make sure work of Jesus, one of the Soldiers, at the request of the

Vol. II. Jews that stood by, as we may probably conjecture, thrust his Spear thro' his Heart, as appears by the Blood and Water that came out of the Wound; whereby another Prophecy was fulfill'd, that faith, *they shall look on me whom they pierced.*

Zech. 12.
10.

No sooner was this done but *Joseph of Arimathea*, an honourable Councillor, and one that believ'd in Jesus having begg'd his Body of *Pilate*, came and took him down; and having wrap'd him in clean Linnen, he and *Nicodemus*, who brought a great quantity of Spices to Embalm him, with great decency and respectful care, carry'd him to a new Sepulcher or Burying Place, of *Joseph's*, like our Vaults, which was in a Garden near at hand, lately made for himself and Family.

Mar. 15.
46.

Now when they had laid him in one of the Cells or Graves that were cut out in the Rock for that purpose, and cover'd it with a Stone fitted for it, and clos'd up the Entrance of the Sepulcher with a large Stone that was likewise provided for that purpose, they went their way; the Pious Women that follow'd Jesus to his Crucifixion having attended his Body to the Burial, and beheld

—47.

beheld where and how it was laid. But Vol. II. the Chief Priests and Pharisees, having heard him say while he was alive, that *after three days he would rise again*; to prevent that, if possible, which as they said rightly would be of worse consequence to them than all the rest, and mightily confirm the People in their Belief in him as the Messias; they went to *Pilate*, desiring him to set a Guard about the Sepulcher till the third Day was past, lest his Disciples should steal him away, and say he was risen from the Dead. Which request *Pilate* granted, and bid them make it as sure as they could, and they did so, *sealing the stone* at the Mouth of the vault, and setting a watch. Which mighty care of theirs, to prevent any thing that might look like his rising again, prov'd an unanswerable Argument of the reality of it, since there could be no Cheat where so much caution was us'd to prevent it. For as for the Soldiers that guarded him, saying as they were hir'd to do, that his Disciples stole him away while they Slept, that was so ridiculous, that it manifestly confuted it self.

Now when the first Day of the Week began to dawn, early in the Morning
before

Vol. II. before the Sun was up, *Mary Magdalene*, and other Pious Women with her, having so far restrain'd their Zeal as not to go till the *rest* of the *Sabbath* was over, (and 'twould be very happy if all that have Zeal would govern it as well as they did) went then with eager haste to performe the last Offices of kindness and respect to their dead Master, and fill his Grave with Spices to preserve his Body the longer from Putrefaction, and once more to water it with their affectionate Tears, and take their last farewell.

But when they came near the Place, they were in great care how to remove the heavy Stone that they saw plac'd at the Entrance of the Sepulcher; when approaching nearer, they saw 'twas remov'd to their hands; and which was much to their Amazement, they saw an Angel at the entrance into the Sepulcher sitting upon it, *whose countenance*
was like lightning, and his raiment white as Snow. And presently after, entring further into the Place where Jesus was laid, they saw *two Angels in white sitting*
the one at the head, the other at the feet,
where the Body of Jesus had lain (like the *two Cherubs* at each end of the *Mercy Seat.*)

Matt. 28.

2. 3.

Mar, 16.

5.

John 20.

12.

Seat.) And they said why weep you, why
seek ye the living among the dead? he is Exod. 25.
18.
19. &c.,
not here but is risen.

And so little did the Apostles and our Saviour's other Friends expect this joyful News, notwithstanding he had foretold them of it, (much less did they combine together to make the Story) that they were in strange confusion upon it, and scarce knew how to believe one anothers Reports about it. Their Joy was dash'd with Fear, their Hope with Distrust, and our Lord was fain by many infallible Arguments, to take pains to convince them of the Truth of his Resurrection; and which we shall have occasion to take notice of by and by.

Not to insist therefore any further upon the matter of Fact, or *History* of our Saviour's Resurrection, which to all unprejudic'd People is attested beyond all doubt, and every circumstance of it very affecting and worthy our devout Meditation, and all things consider'd, is the greatest of all his Miracles; I shall proceed to shew of what great consequence it is to us.

And 'tis of so great consequence, that *St. Paul* says, Had not Christ risen from
the

Vol. II. the Dead, *our faith would be in vain.* His whole Argument upon this most important Subject, is drawn up in one view, in the 15th. *ch.* 1st. *Cor.* where after he had asserted the matter of Fact from the Testimony of Eye-Witneses, of which himself was one that had seen him *alive*, after they knew him to have been dead and bury'd, and those not only his Apostles and particular Friends, but

1 Cor. 15.
8. five Hundred Persons that saw him at once, most of them then living when he wrote that Epistle, which was not many Years after: After this establishing the matter of Fact he shews of what mighty Importance it is to us, and says directly, *If Christ be not rais'd, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.* The reason of which assertion I shall now endeavour to shew that we may see of what vast Consequence our Lord's Resurrection is to us, and with what Holy Joy, consequently, we should celebrate the Festival that is ordain'd by the Church in Commemoration of it.

v. 17.

And first, *if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins* because he was our Representative, substituted in our place and stead, and therefore, by Gods dealing with *him*, we may

may know both what we had before Vol. II.
deserv'd, and what we may now expect
our selves.

Now, what he *suffer'd* for us, what Agonies, what Shame, what Grief, what cruel Torments even to the Death, we have seen in the preceeding Discourse; which gives us a terrible Demonstration of what we our selves had *deserv'd* by reason of our Sins.

But had this been all, how should we have known that God had been *appeas'd* by those his Sufferings? For his enduring those *Miseries* as our Representative, if we go no *further*, was only an Argument of God's fierce *Anger* against us; and had nothing of a milder aspect follow'd, his cruel Death would bring Terror to us rather than Comfort, and serve only to let us know what we must one Day suffer since God made him so miserable that represented us, and took upon him to negotiate our Affairs with him. As when an Enemy uses those that come to treat with him of Peace contemptuously, and with great Severity, 'tis an argument of his Resolution to continue an Enemy still, and that no quarter is to be expected from him, by those that shall come into his Power.

'Tis

Vol. II. 'Tis therefore God's raising the Crucify'd Jesus from the Dead that is the great confirmation of our Hope; this assures us that he accepted the satisfaction which he offer'd for us, that his Death was indeed an *Atonement*, or else he would never, in so Glorious and Triumphant a Manner, have rais'd him up again. And therefore says St. Peter, God rais'd him from the dead and gave him glory that your faith and hope might be in God.

1 Pet. 1.
21.

And accordingly, we find the Apostles upon all occasions endeavouring to establish the belief of the *Resurrection* of Christ. Thus, when they were about supplying the place of the Traitor Judas, they said 'twas needful One should be ordain'd to be a witness with them of Jesus's Resurrection, as if that was the thing to be chiefly insisted on in their Preaching to the World. And in the 4. Acts 2. we read that they taught the People, and Preach'd, thro' Jesus, the Resurrection of the dead: and v. 33. with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and St. Paul at Athens Preach'd Jesus and the Resurrection: and in the 8. Rom. 34. who is he that condemneth? Says the same great Apostle, it is Christ that dy'd, yea, rather

Acts. 1.
22.

Acts. 17.
18.

rather that is risen again: and chap. 10. Vol. II.

9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath rais'd him from the dead, thou shalt be sav'd: and St. Peter says, That Baptism itself saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 3. 21.

And the Jews that Crucify'd Jesus were so sensible of this ill consequence as they thought it, of his Resurrection, that they took all possible care as we have seen to prevent it, and when that would not do, but they found he was really risen, then they did what they could to suppress the Rumour of it, and gave large Mony to the Soldiers to confess their negligence in guarding him, and that his Disciples carry'd him off, while they Slept; and if this should come to the Governor's Ears, they promis'd to persuade him, and secure them. And why all this Concern to stifle the report of our Lord's Resurrection, but because, as they said, *This last error would be worse than the first?* That is, it would confirm the World more than any thing besides in their Belief in him as the great Saviour of Mankind, and make them appear deeply guilty of his Innocent and most Sacred Blood.

But

Vbl.II. But secondly, our Lord's Resurrection is of the greatest consequence to us, because our *own Resurrection* depends upon it, without which we could never reap the full benefit of his Sufferings for us, nor enjoy the reward of our Faith and Obedience, and patient Suffering for *him*, which is reserv'd to a future Life, in another World that is Spiritual and Eternal.

Christ has told us plainly that his Kingdom is not of this World, and foretels Troubles and Afflictions as the lot of his truest Disciples here, and bids us fix our Hearts upon our Treasure in Heaven; wherefore since 'tis appointed for us all once to Dye, if we should not be reviv'd and rais'd again, how would it be possible for us to inherit those Promises of the Gospel, which are not to be enjoy'd till after Death?

For tho' the Soul is Spiritual and survives the Body, and shall never die, and so is capable of being Happy in a separate State without the Body; yet 'tis the Body and Soul *united* that makes the *Man*, and 'tis not to either part *singly* that the Promises of Christianity are made, but to our compleat *whole selves*, as subsisting of a reasonable Soul and
humane

humane Flesh. And tho' our future Vol. II.
Happiness be stil'd the Salvation of the
Soul, yet that is only by way of Honour
to it, as the nobler Part, but not at all
exclusive of the Body. And indeed,
'twould be very hard if the Body, after
sharing so much in the labours of Reli-
gion, should never partake of the re-
wards of it, wick it could not do with-
out a Resurrection.

Why, as the Apostle argues, should
we deny our selves the gratifications of
Sense to the highth; why should we
keep under the Body, and make it sub-
mit to the Government of Christianity;
why should we expose it to the Cross,
to Pain and Sorrow and Persecution for
the sake of Jesus and his Truth, and
stand in jeopardy every Hour, and die
daily, *if the dead rise not?* This would
make Christians of all Men the most
miserable, and 'twould then be more
eligible to follow *Epicurus's* Direction,
Let us eat and drink for to morrow we Dye.
That is, let us enjoy Life while we have
it, and with Solomon, *not withhold our*
Soul from any joy; because our present
condition is all we can depend upon,
and our continuance here very short
and uncertain, and when we are gone
Cc from

Vol. II. from hence, if there be no Resurrection, we shall be, as to our whole Man, compos'd of Soul and Body vitally united, as if we had never been, and there's an end of us, as such, for ever.

But now that *Christ is risen from the dead*, we are assur'd that we shall be rais'd also; our Soul and Body once again united and that inseparably, and made capable of enjoying in our whole Man the glorious Recompence of our pious Labours in a happy Eternity.

For Christ, we are told is our *Head*,
Coloss. 1. 18. and we are his *Members*, and his *Body*;
1 Cor. 6. 15. and therefore since this our Head is risen, we that are his Members and his Body shall in due time follow, and be rais'd likewise: and had he not arisen, but been always kept under the power of Death, *that* would have been our Fate too, and a hopeless Disconsolate one, like that of the Beasts that perish. And Accordingly says our Lord, refering to his Resurrection, *because I live, ye shall live*
John 1. 19. *also*, and that will convince you *that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*;
 20. That there is a Spiritual Union between us, as of Head and Members, actuated and inform'd by one and the same Spirit: and therefore, says St. Paul, *He that*

that is join'd to the Lord, by Faith and Vol. II.
 Obedience is one Spirit, and his Body ^{1 Cor. 6.}
 is become the Temple of the holy Ghost; and ^{17.}
 if the Spirit of him that rais'd up Jesus ^{—19.}
 from the dead dwell in you, he that rais'd
 up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken
 your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwell- ^{Rom. 8.}
 eth in you. That is, since that All-quick- ^{11.}
 ning Spirit did again invigorate and
 enliven his dead Body, and restore it
 to a more glorious Life; the same Spi-
 rit abiding in us, and making us one
 with Christ our Head, we likewise, by
 the Power and Operation of the same
 Life-giving Spirit, shall after Death
 certainly rise again. And this is fur-
 ther illustrated by our Lord's calling
 himself the *Vine*, and his Disciples the ^{John 15.}
Branches; and therefore he tells us, ^{He 4, 5, 6.}
that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth
forth much fruit, Lives, and Thrives
and Flourishes; but if a man abide not
in me, he is cast forth as a Branch that is
Sever'd from the living Stock of the
Vine, and is wither'd, and men gather
them, and cast them into the fire, and they
are burn'd. If the Root and Body of the
 Vine is alive, the sound Branches that
 are united to it, will live also; but if
 that be quite dry and dead, the whole

Vol. II. of the Vine must necessarily be so too. Christ therefore being the Root and Stock of the *Vine*, by which the *Church* is often represented in Scripture; upon his living again after Death, or shooting forth anew, never to die any more, we have assurance of *our* Resurrection to Eternal Life, who are the *Branches*.

Another illustration of this great and most comfortable Truth, is Christ's being call'd by St Paul, the *First Fruits of them that slept*, 1. Cor. 15. 20. For as the Offering the first of the Fruits of the Earth at the beginning of Harvest, to that God whose Clouds drop Fatness, and give new Life to the dead corrupted Seed that was buried in the Ground and make it spring up unto a manifold Increase, was a Sanctifying and Consecration of the rest of the Crop that was soon after to be gather'd in, and brought the Divine Blessing upon it; so Christ, like precious Seed committed to the Furroughs, rising from his bed of Earth, and presenting himself to his Heavenly Father as the first Fruits of those that slept in Him, the whole Harvest shall in due Time follow, and all his true Disciples being reviv'd by the same

same Life-giving power, shall like the Vol. II.
good Grain be repositied in places of
Eternal Joy and Safety.

So that all our Hopes of the Happiness of a future State, depend upon the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour from the dead; who, as our Representative, suffer'd the inflictions of God's fierce Anger, and then appeas'd it with his Blood: and by His Triumph over Death and the Grave, in rising gloriously from it, has shewn that he has compleated our Redemption, and merited for *us* also a happy Resurrection to Eternal Life, and a full never ceasing Enjoyment of the future Rewards of the Gospel. Whereas had he still Continu'd dead, all our expectations of any benefit thro' *Him* would have been for ever Blasted, and as uncomfortable, as *Job* expresses it, *as the giving up of the Ghost.*

For we may further consider, that had he not risen from the Dead, he would not have been the *Messias* that was promis'd to the world to redeem it, but a false Prophet, and manifest Impostor.

He would not have been the true *Messias*, if he had not risen, because of *him* it was foretold, thar he should arise;

Vol. II. for thus St. Peter says, 2 Acts. 24. 25.

'Twas impossible that Jesus of Nazareth, being the Messias, should be holden of the pains of death, because David thus speaketh concerning him, Ps. 16. 9, 10, 11. My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, or the Grave, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption; Thou wilt shew me the path of life. Which as he argues, can't be spoken of David himself, because he remains still dead and bury'd in the Sepulcher of his Fathers; but as a Prophet, he spake it of the Resurrection of Christ, or the Messias, and therefore had not Jesus arisen from the dead, he would not have been that Christ, but a manifest false Prophet and Impostor.

Mat. 16.

21.

17.—9.

20.—19.

John 2.

19.

For he often foretold in his Life-time, that after his Enemies had Murther'd him, he would in three days rise again; and the Jews as we have heard remembered that he had done so, and went and told Pilate of it, and begg'd a Guard of him to prevent any Juggles about it amongst his Disciples, and seal'd the Stone at the entrance of his Sepulcher, and made all things as sure as they could. Now if after all this Jesus had not risen, the description that God him-
self

self gives of a false Prophet would have Vol. II.
been fix'd upon him ; for thus, 18. Deut.
20, 21. to this Question, *How shall we
know the Word, in the mouth of any
one that pretends to be a Prophet, which
the Lord hath not spoken?* He returns this
answer. *When a Prophet speaketh in the
name of the Lord, if the thing follow not,
neither come to pass, that is the thing which
the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet
hath spoken it presumptuously.* And would
not he have been a manifest Impostor,
who thus drill'd on his Followers in the
Belief and Expectation of so great a Lie !
And he that should have fail'd so noto-
riously in one of his main Promises which
he so often repeated, and upon which
so much depended, as we have heard
before ; would have given just reason
to the world to conclude, that his whole
Pretence was a Cheat.

And if so, then certainly, as the *Apos-
tle* argues, *our Preaching in his Name,
would be in vain, and your Faith also vain ;*
even as vain as that of the *Turks*, that
believe in the Impostor *Mahomet*.

Therefore, our Blessed Lord himself,
as was hinted before, took more than
ordinary Care to assure his Disciples,
and the World, of his Resurrection, and

Vol. II. put it beyond dispute. He plac'd an Angel at the entrance into his Sepulcher, to acquaint those that should come thither to look for him, that he was not there but was risen; and accordingly when *Mary Magdalene*, with other Women came, the Angel bid them *go quickly, and tell his Disciples that*

Mat. 28.
7. *He was risen from the dead.* And Jesus himself frequently appear'd to them, and gave them the most sensible demonstration of his being really risen, by walking and discoursing with them as formerly, and conversing with them at times, for forty Days together. And when, at his sudden unexpected appearance amongst them, as they were met together in private with the Doors shut for fear of the *Jews*, they were terrify'd and affrighted, and thought they had seen a *Spirit*, some airy Phantasm or Spectre, and Delusion of *Satan*, he bids them behold his wounded Hands and his Feet, that it was he himself, *Handle me, and see*, says he, *for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

And need enough there was for this, not only that they might want no evidence of a thing of so great Importance, but because (so far were they from being over

over-credulous) they were so backward Vol. II.
to believe it.

For when the Women that had been at the Sepulcher, and saw the Angel at the entrance of it, and when they went in, saw 2 Angels, one at each end of his Grave, and look'd into it, and found nothing but the Linnen Cloths in which he was wrap'd; and as they went to give notice of it to the rest of the Disciples met Jesus himself by the way, alive, and held him by the Feet and worship'd him: when they reported all this, *their words seem'd as idle tales*, as if it 'twere only the effect of Fancy and a strong imagination, and the Apostles and the rest would not believe them. Nay, even after he had appear'd to the Apostles themselves, and appeal'd not only to their Eyes and Ears but their touch, as we have seen; they still continuing to doubt, thro' Exceeding Joy and Wonder, which for the present stupify'd 'em, and made them all over amazement and confusion; to demonstrate, if possible, still plainer, the reality of his being alive again, *he said unto them, have ye here any meat? and they gave him a piece of a broil'd fish, and of a hony-comb*, and he took it, and did eat it before them. And because Thomas who

Luke, ult.
39.

—40. 8

Vol. II. who was then absent, did still refuse to give credit to the report of the other Apostles, and said, *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into them, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe*; Jesus again appear'd to them a few Days after, and stood in the midst and call'd to Thomas, *reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing*. And then, as well he might, Thomas was fully satisfy'd, and said, *my Lord, and my God!*

John 20.
26. 27.

Now why all this extraordinary care, think we, in our Saviour to confirm the Truth of his Resurrection beyond all doubt? But because 'twas that upon which the whole of Christianity depended, and a thing of the greatest consequence of all, and which the Apostles were chiefly to insist upon, in their Preaching the Gospel to the World; and therefore ought to have the clearest demonstration of it that could be given. And such they had, as we have seen, and therefore did constantly affirm it to be so, and seal'd the Truth of it with their Blood.

Having thus shewn of what mighty Im-

Importance our Saviours Resurrection Vol. II.
 is to us; let me exort you in the Words
 of the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, *To be*
stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the ^{1 Cor. 15.}
work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that ^{ult.}
your labour is not in vain in the Lord.
 Steadfast and unmoveable in the Belief of
 this Doctrine, notwithstanding the va-
 rious Arts the Devil uses to remove us
 from it; and adding to this our Faith
 Virtue, a constant persevering *abound-*
ing Piety, since we have such mighty
 encouragements to it, as a Resurrecti-
 on to an Immortal glorious Life hereaf-
 ter, and the uninterrupted Enjoyment
 of the Happiness of Heaven, which will
 render the utmost Labours of Religion
 infinitely far from being in vain.

And various Arts there are which the
 Devil uses to remove us from this *Basis*
 of our Faith, knowing that all Religi-
 on would fall together with it.

Sometimes he endeavours to perswade
 us that the Resurrection of the Dead is
impossible, and fills our Minds with
 Doubts and Scruples about it, putting
 us upon inquiring into the *Manner* of it,
How the dead are raised up, and with what
kind of body they come? As St. Paul puts the
 Objection of some incredulous *Corin-
 thians.*

Vol. II. *ans.* And when he finds Men at a stand about it, (as no wonder if they are) and difficulties crowd in upon their Thoughts, which they can't tell how to remove; then is this great Deceiver ready to help 'em to this false conclusion, *Therefore it cannot be.*

And to back this his own immediate on-set upon a Christians Faith in this Instance, he sets on wicked Men, some to entangle, amuse and confound weaker Minds by a set of fallacious Arguments; others to *ridicule* the Doctrine, and play their Wit upon it, and live in a direct opposition to it, in a course of daring Atheistick Lewdness.

But if we believe there is a Being endow'd with infinite Power, that has declar'd there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, and that he will bring it to pass; *why should it be thought a thing incredible,* (as St. Paul ask'd King Agrippa) that this Omnipotent Being, *should be able to Raise the Dead?* Especially if this Almighty Being has given us divers Specimens of it already, and those as well attested as ever any matter of Fact was in the World. First let us give a satisfactory Account to our selves and others, of the Resurrection of a
Blade

Blade and Ear of Corn from a dry, dead Vol. II.
and buried, and putrify'd Seed, and
answer all the Difficulties and Queries
that can be propos'd about it, before
we pronounce it Impossible or Incredi-
ble that God should raise the Dead. But
I shall say no more now upon this Par-
ticular of the *Possibility* of a Resurrecti-
on, having already consider'd it at large
upon another occasion.

As for the drollery of prophane Wits, Vol. 1. up-
on the Re-
surrection
of Laza-
rus.
upon this fundamental Article of our
Faith, they are below the notice of any
serious Christian; and there is infinitely
more Satisfaction in the belief of the Ar-
ticle, than there can be of Sting in their
most pointed Satyrs against it. And he is
a very weak Person indeed, that will suffer
himself to be *laugh'd* out of any rational
Opinion, especially an Opinion that has
so much to be said for it, and is of so very
great Moment and Concern as this.

But after all, were the Resurrection
to be to a new, more pleasant and end-
less Life of sensuallity here below; I'm
apt to think 'twould meet with very
little opposition from our nice Disputers,
and all the difficulties of it would be
easily swallow'd because this is what
they would have. And therefore 'tis
very

Vol. II. very plain, whatever is pretended, that 'tis not the unaccountableness of it to Reason that makes them boggle at it so much; but because it lets into a State which they have no relish for, and will bring them before a Tribunal which they can't but infinitely dread.

For it must needs be a great mortification to one that has indulg'd himself so much in the Pleasures of *Sense*, as Men of this Character do, to think of another World, that is purely *Spiritual*; where all those sensual Enjoyments which his Soul so loves, will have no Place, but must forever be left behind him when he dies, and nothing follow him into that future State, but what will make him extremely miserable, at the rate he leads his Life here. And therefore, he's resolv'd, if possible, to believe that there is no such thing, as any Resurrection to another Life after this, or any future State when we are gone from hence.

Others there are, that out of a pretence of extraordinary Sanctity, and refin'd Religion, dis-believe the Resurrection in a *literal* Sense, and make it wholly *allegorical*; and with them, the whole Story of our Saviour's Life and Death

Death and Resurrection, and Ascension, Vol. II. is no other than a mystical Account of the Progress of the Soul in Holiness; no such thing really transacted by Jesus Christ without us, but *within* only in our own Breasts. And consequently, that a proper real Resurrection of *our* Bodies likewise after Death is not to be expected; but when the *inward mystical* Resurrection is perform'd, there is an end of the Matter.

A strange sort of People these, that would fain be thought better Christians than ordinary, and yet in effect are no Christians at all; having rarify'd the most fundamental Doctrines of the Faith, into a thin aery Nothing, and spiritualiz'd Christianity so far, till they have quite lost it, and let go the substance of it, for vain enthusiastick Dreams and Shadows.

But as for this particular of the Resurrection of our Lord from the Dead and our own as consequent upon it, I shall only advise the careful reading the Account the Evangelists give of Christ's Resurrection, and the Discourse of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15. concerning our own at the end of the World; and that will
secure

Vol. II. secure us against the Infection of such wild Anti-Christian Opinions as these.

For can any one in his Wits, think that such a particular Account would be given in the Gospels, of Christ's rising from his Tomb the third Day after he was Buri'd as he had told his Disciples he would, and set down so many circumstances of it, and tell us of many Eye-witnesses that saw and convers'd with him after he was risen, of which number were two of those that wrote the Gospels, and the other two Instructed by those that were; would such an account be given by them of a thing that was never really done? And would the Apostles have taken such care to prove it to the World, as a matter of Fact upon which the whole Truth of Christianity depended, if after all 'twas nothing but Mystery and Figure? What strange, and I may truly say, *Diabolical* Delusions are these!

And as for our *own* Resurrection from the Dead at the last Day, as consequent upon the Resurrection of Christ, which *St. Paul* excellently establishes in the place mention'd but now; do these People think *St. Paul* was a true Apostle, rightly instructed in the Christian Religion,

gion, and that he wrote the First Vol. II
 Epistle to the *Corinthians* by Inspiration of the Spirit of God, or not? If not, Why do they read and quote these and other his Writings as such, and not rather utterly reject both *them* and his Authority? But if they do own him as a true Apostle, and his Writings as Divinely Inspir'd, then why dare they broach a Doctrin so manifestly contrary to what he has taken so much Pains to assert? Does he not in Answer to that Query, *How are the Dead rais'd up, and with what Body do they come?* Give us a very particular Account both with what Kind of Bodies Men shall arise, and as far as Words could express describe the manner *How?* Now to give a serious Description of the *manner* of a Thing's being done, which shall never be done at all, is certainly a very great piece of Nonsense and Impertinence; for of a Thing that is not, nor ever shall be, all the World agrees that nothing can be reasonable either affirm'd or deny'd. And therefore, we must either say of St. Paul as *Festus* did, That *much Learning had made him mad*, when he talk'd to Him about the Resurrection; or else Believe that there shall be a real pro-

D d

per

*Act. 26.
23. 24.*

Vol. II. per Resurrection of our Bodies after Death, as there was of our Saviour's after his Death and Burial, *every one in his own order; Christ the First Fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming;* of which St. Paul has given us so particular a Description, and upon which he lays so Much stress.

1 Cor. 15.
23.

And what ever high Pretences to extraordinary Holiness this Opinion of only an Allegorical Resurrection may make, 'tis really the greatest discouragement to true Holiness that can be; as taking away the certainty of those future Eternal Rewards and Punishments, which are the great security of our obedience to the Christian Law. And how ludicrous would this make the Threats and Promises of Religion, and be infinitely unbecoming Him that is the Source of Truth and Goodness; and prove, as I doubt it often does, a prevailing Temptation to utter Atheism and Infidelity.

Wherefore, let us all that pretend to be *Christians* give due Attention to the great Evidence of this Fundamental Article, and with all possible Care and Watchfulness, guard our selves against the Artifices of him that would remove us from this Foundation of our Faith;
and

and Hold fast the Profession of it with-
out wavering, remembring that he is
faithful that hath promis'd, and in due
time will do it.

And as it highly concerns us to be
thus *steadfast* and *Unmoveable* in our Be-
lief, so it equally concerns us to take care
that our *Practice* be agreeable; and al-
ways to *Abound in the Work of the Lord*,
for as much as we have such assurance
that our *Labour shall not be in vain*.

Our *Labour*, shall not be in vain, but
our *Idleness* can expect no Reward, un-
less it be that of the slothful Servant,
who *knew* His Master's Will but did not
Do it.

And if the endless and inconceivable
Glories of Heaven shall be the Recom-
pence of our poor imperfect services here,
and the degrees of that our Future Hap-
piness shall be according to the Degrees
of our honest Diligence, in obeying the
Will of our Great Master *now*; and the
least degree of Bliss and Glory there
shall infinitely exceed what our best and
longest Obedience Here, can ever pre-
tend to deserve: what abundant encou-
ragement have we, with the Utmost
Zeal and cheerfulness, to Do and suffer
any thing that so bountiful a Master

Vol. II. shall think fit to require at our Hands !
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of our Blessed Lord when he shall come to receive to Himself those that are His, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and He shall, change this our vile Body that it may be Fashion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to Himself.

Wherefore to Conclude ; with what triumphant Joy should we welcome every return of that great Festival, which is kept in remembrance of our All-powerful Redeemer's Conquest over Hell and Death, and opening to us the Gates of Everlasting Life ! And how should we Bless and Magnify our Divine Champion's ever glorious Name, who hath been thus *Mighty to save*, and resolve to make an intire Oblation of our selves to be his servants for ever ; and that as he dy'd and rose again for us,
“ so will we die unto sin, and Rise again
“ unto Righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt Affections, and Daily proceeding in
“ all vertue and Godliness of Living.
For now we are assur'd beyond all reafo-

reasonable doubt, that this short Life Vol. II.
is but a state of Probation for another
endless one; and that there shall be a
Resurrection both of the Just and Unjust,
which shall let us into it, and where,
our Condition will be eternally Happy
or Miserable, according to our Works
Here below. Wherefore, let us make
it our constant endeavour now with all
Sincerity and Diligence to prepare for a
Happy Immortality, by sowing the
Seeds of Righteousness and true Holi-
ness in this Life, which shall then spring
up to everlasting Glory.

*To which, the good Lord bring us all in
his good time, thro' the Merits and Medi-
ation of Jesus our Redeemer! Amen, A-
men!*

Practical

Vol. II. PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON OUR

Saviour's Miracles, &c.

XII.

Our Saviour's glorious Ascension into Heaven.

LUKE 27. 50. &c.

*And he led them out as far as to Bethany,
and he lift up his Hands and blessed
them.*

*And it came to pass while he blessed them,
he was parted from them, and carry'd up
into Heaven.*

*And they worshipped him, and return'd to
Jerusalem with great joy; and were
continually in the Temple praising and
blessing God.*

Our

OUR blessed Lord, Having shew'd Vol. II
 Himself alive after his Passion by
 many Infallible Proofs, as we have heard,
 and speaking to his Apostles of the things
 pertaining to the Kingdom of God; Opening *Acts. 1. 3.*
 their understanding that they might under-
 stand the scriptures, and discern how all
 things were fullfil'd which were written in *Luke 24.*
 the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets and *44. 45. &*
 in the Psalms Concerning Him; that it
 behov'd him to suffer, as he had done, and
 to Rise from the Dead the Third Day, of
 all which they were witnesses: he gave
 them Commission (blessed be his Good-
 ness!) to Preach Repentance and Remi-
 ssion of Sins in his name among all Nations,
 beginning at Jerusalem; and to teach
 them his Holy Religion, which they
 had learn'd of him, and require their ob-
 servance of all things, whatsoever he had
 commanded them; Receiving into his
 Church whoever would profess to Be-
 lieve in him, by Baptizing them in the *Mat. 28.*
 Name of the Father and of the Son, and of *19. 20.*
 the Holy Ghost; assuring them, as they
 might assure others from him, that he
 that believeth and is Baptiz'd shall be sav'd,
 and he that believeth not shall be damn'd. *Mar. 16.*

And then, to encourage them in a *16.*
 vigorous prosecution of a Work of so

Vol. II. much Difficulty and Danger, he tells
 Mai. 28. them, *All Power is given unto me in Hea-*
 18. *ven and in Earth*; and assures them that
he will send the Promise of his Father up-
on them, that is, the Holy Ghost, who
should miraculously assist them; but in
the mean time he bid them tarry in Je-
rusalem, and not enter upon their Mi-
nistry, until by his Descent, they were
endu'd with Power from on high, to enable
them to discharge it effectually. And
 Luke 24. *then he lift up his Hands and blessed them,*
 50. *and as the Seal of their high Commis-*
sion, breathed on them, and saith unto them,
 John 20. *receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever Sins*
 22, 23. *ye remit they are remitted unto them, and*
whosoever Sins ye retain they are retained;
and while he was blessing them he was
taken up from the Earth, in that very
place where he got upon the Ass to
ride in Triumph into Jerusalem, and
was parted from them, and triumphant-
ly carry'd up to the Heavenly Jerusalem
upon a bright Cloud, like that which
cover'd him at his Transfiguration;
and at length mounted out of their sight.
 Acts 1. 9, *And while they look'd stedfastly towards*
 10, 11. *Heaven as he went up with wondering*
Eyes, and ravish'd Hearts, behold two
Angels, like Men in white Apparel, stood
by

by them, and said, Ye Men of Galilee, Vol. II.
why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This
same Jesus which is taken up from you into
Heaven, shall come in like manner as ye
have seen him go into Heaven. And then,
after they had worship'd their glorify'd
Master, they return'd to Jerusalem with
great Joy, in expectation of the Holy
Ghost coming upon them, as Jesus had
lately promis'd, and was miraculously *Acts 1.*
made good in a few Days after, and were
Continually in the Temple, Praising and
Blessing God, and employ'd in Prayer
and Supplication, as the best preparation
for the reception of that Heavenly
Gift.

This is the Account we have of our
Saviour's *Ascension* into that Heaven of
Heavens, from whence he came with
wondrous Charity to take upon him
our Flesh, and in our Nature to become
an Expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins;
Thus did he triumphantly return to his
Heavenly Father, after he had finish'd
the stupendious Work of Man's Re-
demption, and was plac'd at the Right
hand of the Majesty on high, and having
overcome the sharpness of Death, open'd the
Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers: be-
ing the first of Humane Race, as the an-
cient

Vol. II. **W**isient Fathers were generally of Opinion, that was ever admitted into the presence of God in those inmost Glorious Courts above, where he is pleas'd to manifest himself (in a manner unconceivable by us now) to those that shall be admitted to live for ever with him.

Thither is our Lord now entred, to prepare a place for us, till he shall come at the close of all things to receive us to himself, that where he is there we may be also; when by his mighty Power our mortal fleshy Bodies shall be made capable of that Spiritual State, and our Souls united to them, and we become compleatly the same Persons we were before we dy'd, only Glorify'd and made Immortal. And in the mean time our departed Spirits shall be dispos'd of in places of great Comfort and Joy, in longing expectation of their consummate Bliss; for the hastning of which all good Christians ever did, and do, earnestly pray. This was the Doctrine of the Primitive Church; and tho' after times added to it strange wild Opinions, which we have great reason to reject; yet so far, there is much probability, and I am sure no harm.

Now

Now our Blessed Master, tho' absent Vol.IV
from his Spouse the Church in the high-
est Heavens, yet is always mindful of
her, and soliciting her best interest
with God; interceeding with him, in
Virtue of his meritorious Sacrifice, for
the greatest Blessings, which he con-
stantly confers upon her; presenting
the Prayers of every one of her faith-
ful Members, and powerfully recom-
mending them to the Divine acceptance;
and making use of the unlimited Power
he hath in defending her from the as-
saults of all her Enemies.

For as a *Prince and a Saviour God* hath *Acts 5.31.*
exalted him to sit at his right Hand, and
invested him with Godlike Power, able
to make all his Enemies his footstool, and
to save all those to the uttermost that come
to God by him. And as our *Eternal*
High-Priest, he is entred into the most *Heb.7.24.*
Holy Place within the Veil, the Place of
inaccessible Light and Glory in the high-
est Heaven, there to appear for ever in the *Heb.9.24.*
presence of God for us; and that not as a
precarious Intercessor, who possibly might
speed, and it may be not; but with
the price of our Redemption in his
Hand, his own most precious Blood, he
makes his claim on our behalf with full
assurance

Vol. II. assurance of success; having a *Right* to show to what he asks for us, and which for just and good a God will not deny.

Heb. 4. 14.

How constant then, and how cheerful, should this make us in our Holy Profession? How patient and persevering *in the Race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endur'd the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God!*

12.—1. 2.
3.

4—16.

What a mighty encouragement is it to us, to come *boldly to the Throne of Grace, and with an humble Confidence and Freedom to make frequent devout Addresses to the Divine Majesty, and lay before him all our Wants; since thro' the prevailing intercession of our great Advocate, we may be sure to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need!*

And how powerfully should this Triumphant Ascension of our dear Redeemer into the Regions of Eternal Happiness and Glory, with a design to bring *us* likewise thither in due time; and his expressly telling us that he will one Day come and fetch us to those blest Abodes, those *Mansions*, or everlasting Inheritances which he is gone to make ready

ready for us; how powerfully should Vol. II.
this engage us to *Set our affections on* ^{John 14.}
things above, not on things on the earth ^{2.}
How should it wean us from the empty ^{Coloss. 3.}
Nothings of this sinful World, and
make us scorn the little gay Vanities
that would divert us from our Journey
to the Heavenly Jerusalem, where lies
our Inheritance, and our Treasure, and
where a never fading Crown of Glory
is laid up for us, *Which God the righteous*
judge shall give us, at the day of his ap-
pearing.

How stedfastly should we set our Fa-
ces thitherward; and with persevering
Steps in the way our Blessed Lord has
directed, with Eyes fix'd upon our Jour-
nies end, and earnest Prayers for the
continual guidance and support of the
good Spirit of God, cheerfully proceed
till we have arriv'd at that our Blissful
and Eternal Home.

And were this glorious Reversion of
ours often made present to our Minds,
and ponder'd with due seriousness and
attention; and the Thoughts, and Af-
fections, and Resolutions it would ex-
cite, dwelt upon, and persu'd home,
and improv'd as they might be: 'T would
be of admirable efficacy to disengage us
from

Vol. II. from the *present* World, which is so meer a nothing in comparison, and make us not only *indifferent*, but even *dead* to all its poor short-liv'd Enjoyments, and but little affected with its momentary Troubles and Disappointments; and push us on to a vigorous Pursuit of that blessed future State, where Happiness and Glory will be in their utmost Perfection, and insur'd to a holy Soul, without the least diminution to all Eternity.

For having *here no continuing City*, as the Apostle expresses it, but finding all things to be flitting, transitory and uncertain, and at most but of very short continuance; what else should we do, but *seek one to come*, where we may fix and settle, and have an abode that is durable, and secure and safe? And if that future World is so infinitely Glorious and Happy, that our highest flights of Fancy, the utmost force of Imagination, and our most exalted Thoughts and Ideas fall extremely short of it; and the duration of it too, without the least allay of its Felicity, or eclipse of its Glory is to endless Ages, and instead of lessning, shall increase upon us to all Eternity: How should we
seek

Heb. 13.
14.

seek that happy Country with the ut- Vol. II
most application, care and circumspe-
ction, and stick at nothing in our Pas-
sage to it, that will effectually conduce
to our settlement in that blisful Inheri-
tance which our Lord hath prepar'd
for us in his Eternal Kingdom!

Thus I'm sure, we should be affect-
ed upon a good Prospect of bettering
our Condition here in this World; and
were we well assur'd of some new dis-
cover'd Territory of vast extent, Plea-
sant and Plentiful to admiration, reple-
nish'd with every thing that can con-
duce to the Happiness and Glory of hu-
man Life, which, thro' the excellent
temperature of the Air and Climate,
would be extended there to the length
of a *thousand Years*, which we should
spend in perfect Health and Vigour,
till some little time before its Period,
and then go off with an easie gentle de-
cay, as Fruit falls from the Tree when
'tis full ripe; And in the mean time,
that we should enjoy during this long
Term, all the Pleasures of Plenty and
Peace, and the best Society, free from
the disturbance of publick Commotions,
or private Domestick Jarrs, with a
clear bright Mind, and inward Tran-
quility

Vol. II. quility and Joy, and meet with nothing but true Friendship in our intercourse with one another, without any fear of Injuries from forreign Enemies, in perfect Security and Quiet: Were there such a Paradise as this here below, and into which, whoever would, might be admitted upon very reasonable Terms; should we not all be fir'd with impatient Desires to arrive at that happy Place, and think every Day an Age, till we had made so advantagious an alteration in our Circumstances? Would some little hazards and difficulties in the way to this Heaven upon Earth, be sufficient to keep us where we are? Should we not rather overlook all, and think of nothing but our happy Journeys end, and press on with all our force, till we had attain'd it? I doubt not but we should, and all our little Projects here, would be at an end; our eager pursuit of the Wealth and Honour and Pleasure of this poor barren Spot, would soon grow cool, and all our Thoughts, our Talk, and our Endeavours be taken up with that other happy Country, and busied in contriving how we might soonest come to share in its Enjoyments.

This

This then is our case; here, as all our Vol. II.
Experience assures us, all Things are
in a continual flux, Life hastens on apace
to the end of its short Period, and all
it's Enjoyments vanish like a shadow, and
and are but like a pleasant Dream, soon
gone at longest, and often broken off
abruptly, and nothing remaining of
substantial Good. And which is worse
still, we often here outlive the small Hap-
piness we have once Enjoy'd, and from
the vigour and sprightliness of Youth
and Health, and the Pleasures we have
tasted in the *Spring* of Life, sink into
Weakness and Pain and Sorrow, and so
linger on in this uncomfortable altera-
tion, till enfeebled Nature can hold out
no longer against the violent Shocks of
various Diseases, but at length yeilds it
self up to Death.

And how often do Riches take to
themselves Wings and fly away, leaving
their former Possessors in the depth of
Poverty and Contempt; and which they
are so much the less able to Bear, as
they flow'd before in Plenty, and had
every Bodies Caresses and Respect!

'Twould be endless to recount every
instance of this World's Vanity and Un-
certainty, and the many sad and sud-

Vol. II. dain turns that all things here below are subject to; and we all of us know enough of this, by our own Experience, to assure us that so it is, and ever will be: and therefore, 'tis indeed well for us that we are not always to continue here.

For who, that seriously considers things, would live for ever if he might, in such a stormy, unconstant, wicked World as this? To be for ever banish'd from our Heavenly Home, and condemn'd to a place of Briars and Thorns, of Cares and Vexations, of Sicknefs and Grief, of Quarrels and Dissensions, without hope of every returning to our native Country; this would be a kind of *Damnation*, a sort of *Hell upon Earth*.

But blessed be the God and Father of Mercies, the case is infinitely better with us, thro' Jesus our Redeemer! Our mournful Condition here, is but of short continuance, and there is another glorious and happy State for which we are design'd, and which our Lord has purchas'd for us with his most precious Blood.

'Tis to that *Canaan* we are Traveling thro' this Wilderness; and Jesus is our great Leader, and will conduct us safely, if we'll follow and be guided by him, to

a City whose builder and maker is God, not fram'd with Hands, of perishing Materials, but Eternal in the Heavens. Vol. 11.

Seeing then, there is *such a rest for the People of God*, a future State of perfect Holiness, and endless Tranquility and Joy, of which our Blessed Saviour when he ascended up on high, took full Possession for us, as our *fore-runner*, and in which, he will actually fix us in due time; with what delight should we think of it, and with what impatience expect the approach of that happy hour, which will make it ours for ever; and prepare our selves for it with a holy Diligence, and watchful care, lest at any time, or by any means, we fall short of it thro' unbelief, thro' want of Faith, Obedience, and Love!

If so long, and so delightful a Life upon this *Earth* as we suppos'd but now, would make us so eager to go to that happy Country, and experience the great and durable Pleasures of it; how much more desirous should we be of arriving safe at *Heaven*, which does so infinitely surpass, in all respects, the most delightful Paradise that could be here below!

For what is a Life even of a *thousand*

E e 2

Years,

Vol. II. Years, to Immortality? To an endless duration, to which ten Thousand Millions of Years are not so much as a drop is to the Ocean? What is a state of perfect Health and Vigour, tho' for a thousand Years twice told, which must end in Death at last; to a condition that is made for ever incapable of any the least Decay, much more of *Dissolution*? all the Principles of Corruption being quite shaken off, and the Body become Bright, and Glorious and Spiritual, and able to live, and move, and act, as Angels do, and needing no other Aliment to feed the Flame of the Cœlestial Life, but that which is the proper Food of Heaven, even the Praise, Adoration and Love of that Divine Fountain of Being and Happiness, *in whose presence is fulness of Joy, and at whose right Hand flow Rivers of Pleasure for evermore.*

Pleasure, not gross and sensual like that we enjoy here below, and which a Brute can Taste with as much Gust and Relish as we; not mix'd with Vexation and Disappointment, short, empty and unsatisfying, but Noble and Rational, Spiritual and Pure, Infinitely satisfying, and always encreasing, made up of Admiration, and the Transports

ports of Joy and Love, proceeding from Vol. II.
the constant presence, and most intimate and full enjoyment, of the Object of our utmost Desires and Wishes, of him who is *altogether Lovely*, infinitely excellent, and infinitely kind and good!

This is Pleasure indeed, truly Heavenly and Divine, to which all Earthly Pleasures, how exquisite soever, are low, and sordid, and contemptible.

So that a truly pious Soul, tho' in never so good Circumstances; *here*, will be continually lingering after her Heavenly Home, and Sigh, and say with the Psalmist, *Woe is me, that I am constrain'd to dwell in Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar? My soul is a thirst for God, even for the living God, O when shall I come to appear before the enravishing presence of my God? when shall I see an end of this my wearisome Pilgrimage thro' this Region of vanity and vexation of Spirit; and come to that blessed Place where there's nothing but Holiness and Happiness, Friendship in Perfection, everlasting Security and Peace, and continual shouts of Triumph and Rejoicing!*

O when shall I join with the Heavenly Quire above, and with them

Vol. II. sing the Praises of the great Captain of our Salvation, saying, *Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ! Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father! Thou art deservedly cloth'd with Divine Majesty and Honour, all Glory be to thee, O Lord most high!*

But alas! we are too generally, numb, and cold, and dead to things of this Spiritual Nature; which is a sad sign of the earthiness of our Hearts, that we are sunk deep in Sensuality, and look no further than the present. O dreadful Stupidity, O fatal Blindness, which God of his Mercy remove! For if so Blessed a Hope as this, and so well grounded will not raise us above the World, we are sunk beyond recovery; and shall be sinking still lower and lower for ever.

Wherefore, let us lift up our Hearts in frequent Contemplation of those future Glories and Felicities, which are prepar'd for us in Heaven, and which nothing can hinder us of but our own Obstinate Impiety, and never leave those Paths of Holiness which will in due time bring us thither; but still go on with Patience, and Resolution, and Hope, since we have the most infallible assurance that can be given us, that a
per-

persevering Religion shall not fail of be- Vol. II.
ing crown'd with the most consummate
Happiness that an immortal soul and
glorify'd Body is capable of enjoying,
in the Presence and the Kingdom of
God, for Ages without End.

We all agree, when we seriously con-
sider, that nothing deserves to be call'd
Happiness but the Joys of Heaven; and
those Joys we all pretend to hope for,
and can't but acknowledge that a Life
of sincere Holiness is the only way to
attain them. And yet, what is less
thought of and prepar'd for than those
Heavenly Joys, and which the greater
part of Mankind make themselves *In-*
capable of by a course of Vice, and Im-
purity, and those that live better, yet
are loath to part with the present, tho'
for so glorious a Reversion, because 'tis
appointed to all Men to *dye* before they
can come into Possession of it.

As for Men's living in contradiction
to those their Hopes of Heaven 'tis be-
cause they so seldom *attend* to those
blessed Hopes, and make them present
to their Minds by serious Meditation;
for if they did, the *Greatness* of them,
notwithstanding their *Distance*, would
be a powerful Inducement to every

Vol. II. man to live according to them, and take the course that will bring him to the fruition of them; especially, since their distance may be far less than we imagine, and a very few Days or Hours perhaps, or Minutes, may carry us to them, or deprive us of them for ever.

But that which seems strangest of all is, that those, who' not only firmly believe that there is a future state of infinite Glory and Happiness prepar'd for the Righteous, and often think of it, and place their chief comfort in it, and prepare themselves for it by a religious Life; are yet afraid to go to it, because *'tis thro' the Grave and Gate of Death.* And 'twill not be amiss to enquire briefly into the cause of this, which seems so very unreasonable now that Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Gospel, and our Blessed Lord has conquer'd Death, and taken out its sting, and by his Ascension into the highest Heavens, has set open those everlasting Gates, and made way for us to follow him, that *where he is, there we may be also.*

And in the first Place, that Principle of *Self-Preservation*, which God has implanted in Man as well as other Creatures

tures, whereby they are all powerfully Vol. II. mov'd, as by a common Instinct of Nature, to prolong their Lives with all possible care, and to continue their Species, that there may be no loss of any part of the Creation, but that all things may continue in the order he at first plac'd them, till the final Consummation; this I suppose may be one reason of even good Men's Fear of Death: 'Tis the strongest of all natural *Antipathies*, and therefore not to be conquer'd but with the greatest difficulty.

And were it not so, 'twould be unaccountable why the *Heathens* who liv'd without the restraints of Religion in this Case, and were unacquainted with the guilt of *self-murder*, and had but very obscure notions of the Punishments of a future State reserv'd for Wicked Men; why such Men as these should so tamely indure the Miseries of humane Life, and not oftner make away with themselves than they did, and with one kind stroke put an end to their Misfortunes.

They might talk what they would of the Cowardice of killing one's self to avoid approaching Evils, which with greater Glory would be grappled with,
and

Vol. II. and overcome, with Patience and passive Virtue; some of their greatest Men we know have been of another Mind, and done the thing, which thousands more of them would not have stuck at in the like Circumstances, were there not something within them more powerful than Philosophy to dissuade them from it, and that was Nature.

Now since the Nature of every Man is the same, and the best of *Christians* have the same general Propensions and Aversions with the rest of Mankind, and our Blessed Lord himself experienc'd them when his bitter Death and Passion were approaching; 'Tis no wonder if they are loath to part with what God has strongly inclin'd them to keep and preserve, and are unwilling to Die, tho' they have good reason to hope for infinite Happiness after Death, when he has woven into their very Constitution a great Desire to live.

Another reason of Death's being so generally dreaded (besides the apprehension of those Pains and Agonies which usually attend it, from which Nature cannot but draw back and shrink) may be the dark, confus'd Notions we have of the other World, and our perfect un-

acquaintedness with the Customs and Vol. II.
Manners, and Place, and every thing
relating to that spiritual state into
which Death will let us.

For we find it here in this Life very
melancholly and uncomfortable to be
among such as are wholly Strangers to
us, and have quite different ways and
usages to what we have formerly been
accustom'd; and the pleasure of Life
is very much lessned by such great alte-
rations in our company, and way of
living; and tho' they may be considera-
bly for the better, yet they are attended
with such Uneasinesses as cause great
Reluctancy in our Breasts when we are
going to make the Experiment, and
are not thought of without some se-
cret Misgivings of Soul.

Now, for a Man to leave all his old
Acquaintance and Associates, his old
Habitation, his former Pleasures and
Enjoiments, for the Society of Creatures
so much unlike those he us'd to Con-
verse with here, in a strange unknown
Place, that live he knows not how, and
are in every thing wholly in the dark to
him; this startles and affrights him, and
makes him dread to Plunge in he knows
not where: and notwithstanding what
the

Vol. II. the Scriptures say in general of the Happiness of their condition in the Spiritual World, who here live and die like good Christians, his Ignorance as to the Particulars relating to it, mightily damps him when he thinks of that great change as near approaching; and like *Lot's Wife* he's apt to turn back, and cast a kind look towards *Sodom*, even when an Angel is conducting him to the Mountains of safety.

But the chief Reason of Men's fear of Death, is their uncertainty as to their condition after it, whether they shall *then* be Happy or Miserable, when their State shall be unalterably fix'd for all Eternity. This is a startling Consideration indeed, and no Man can be blam'd for being very apprehensive of that most important Turn of his Life, which will *make* him or *undo* him for ever; and till he has good Reason to believe he shall change to his Advantage, he may well be afraid to make the Trial.

But tho' for these Reasons 'tis no wonder that Death is dreaded by us, yet every good Christian should endeavour as much as is possible to over-rule his Fears, and conquer his Reluctancies,
and

and reconcile himself to what he knows Vol. II.
must be, and will be of infinitely happy
 consequence to those *that Die in the Lord.* Rev. 14:

And to him that has made it his busi-^{13.}
 ness with an honest Integrity to keep
a Conscience void of offence towards God and
Man, and in Simplicity and godly Since-
rity has had his Conversation in the World,
 according to the rules of the Gospel; and
 then considers what a glorious Reward
 is reserv'd in Heaven for this, thro' the
 Merits of Jesus our Redeemer, who has
 reconcil'd us to God by his Blood, and
 is now at his right Hand interceeding
 for our acceptance with him, in vertue
 of his all-sufficient Sacrifice of himself,
 so that there is now *no Cendemnation to*
those that are in Christ Jesus: To him
 that has thus liv'd, and then makes
 such Reflections; there will appear
 such abundant reason for his being no
 longer afraid to Die, but rather with
 St. Paul earnestly to *desire that happy*
 Hour, as will, and ought to weigh Phil. 1. 23.
 down his natural Aversion to it, and
 answer every other Objection, and in-
 cline him to say Heartily, *Come Lord*
Jesus, come quickly!

For the only *sting of Death is Sin,* of
 which our Saviour has effectually dis-
 arm'd 1 Cor. 15.
56.

Vol. II, arm'd it by his Death, and Triumph'd over it, as absolutely *vanquish'd*, by arising the third Day from the Dead, and then by his Ascension setting open the Gates of Everlasting Life to all Believers. And therefore, unless we add *a New Sting* to it by a Wicked Life, 'twill be no more to be dreaded than *Sleep*, to which the Death of the Righteous is frequently compar'd in Scripture; but rather would be as desirable as a Bed is to a weary Traveller, or to a labouring Man tir'd out with Work.

Whoever therefore, would die comfortably, must first live well; and they that do so, in the sincerity of their Hearts, to the best of their Power, have all the reason in the World to hope, notwithstanding the many Frailties and Imperfections that attend us in this our State of Probation, that when they go from hence, they shall be receiv'd into their Masters Joy.

'Tis true, all that live well, don't die with this comfortable Hope; but this is accidental, sometimes thro' natural timorousness of Temper, sometimes thro' their great Humility, and feeling sense of their Sins, which they fear will render them unfit for the pure Joys of Heaven
and

and very often is the effect of their bodily Distempers, which sink their Spirits and fill their Imaginations with black uncomfortable Fancies, and sad Apprehensions of things. But *tho' heaviness may endure for a Night, yet Joy comes in the Morning*; and as soon as they are quit of their Bodies, the disconsolate scene is at an end; all their Fears and Doubts are vanish'd, and clear up into Transports of exceeding Joy, which will be the more surprizingly great, for being so little expected before.

Wherefore, since Heaven is now our blessed Home purchas'd for us with the Blood of the Son of God, set open to us by his Ascension thither in our humane Nature, which is there highly exalted above all the Cœlestial Hierarchy, Thrones and Principalities, Dominions and Powers paying the humblest Adoration to Jesus our glorifi'd Head; let us have our Conversation where our Home, our Inheritance, our Treasure is, and behave our selves as becomes those that have so undoubted a Title to a Crown of Glory, and so near a Relation to the Eternal Son of the most High.

Let us consider the nature of our future Home, that 'tis a Place all Holy and

Philip. 3.
20.

and pure, and into which no unclean Thing can enter; a State Angelical and Divine, perfectly Spiritual, which Flesh and Blood can't inherit; and let this engage us to *Purify our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God*, as a necessary Preparation for our Enjoyment of that Heavenly Kingdom.

Let us often contemplate the Glory that shall hereafter be reveal'd, and think how unspeakably Happy we shall be, when actual Possession shall be given us of those everlasting Mansions which our Lord has purchas'd for us above! Let us think of the blissful Life we then shall live to all Eternity, and which shall be still the more Blistful and Glorious for our leading this first Life *in all Holy Conversation and Godliness*; And let this put us upon *abounding* in every good Word and Work, which will turn to such great account in Heaven.

And since the time draws every day nearer and nearer, when we shall be either admitted into the Joy of our Lord, or depriv'd of it for ever, let us redeem the time we have already lost, and walk more and more circumspectly
for

for the future ; and with the utmost seriousness and holy Industry apply our selves to the one thing needful, *the making our Calling and Election sure*. For tho' God will not deceive us, but is ever Faithful and True, and what he has promis'd will certainly perform ; yet we may deceive *our selves*, and God knows too often do so, and by failing of what is to be done on *our Part*, make void all that God has engag'd to do on *his*.

So that all these great and glorious Things we have been discoursing of, are so far put into our Power thro' the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour, that nothing can deprive us of them but our selves ; we may if we please be happy sharers in *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and we may forfeit all our Title to that inestimable Reversion, and after all that Christ has done and suffer'd for us, become as miserable as Hell can make us. And to expect to arrive at Heaven, by taking the course that directly leads to Hell, is too gross a delusion for any Man in his Senses not to perceive at first glance.

Let us therefore rouse our selves up, and make use of the reason that God has

Vol. II. given us, and act in the great affair of our Salvation as any Man of sense would do in the affairs of the World. Let us make the best use of the happy opportunities we now have put into our Hands of making our Fortunes for ever; and not drowsily let all slip, and take no notice of them, or foolishly act quite contrary to them, and all the while feed our selves up with the hopes of mighty Things at last. And let us think how full of anguish we shall be, when at the Hour of Death, and Day of Judgment, we shall reflect how happy we might have been if we would, but then see the time irrecoverably past, and nothing left for us to expect but an Eternity of Misery with the Devil and his Angels.

Wherefore, in short, if we hope to go to Heaven at last, we must begin that Heaven upon Earth; we must live as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and have a Devout and Heavenly Mind, and wean our selves more and more from the present World, and set our Affections above. We must look upon our selves as Strangers and Sojourners here, and often think of our Eternal Home,
and

and affectionately long after it, and Vol. II.
make it our chief endeavour to take that
course that will most effectually secure
our safe arrival at it. And above all;
we must beg of God to further us with
his continual help; and that *as he hath
exalted his only Son Jesus Christ with great
Triumph unto his Kingdom in Heaven, so
he would not leave us comfortless; but send
to us his Holy Spirit to comfort and assist
us, and exalt us to the same place whither
our Saviour Christ is gone before.*

And if our belief of our blessed Lord's
Ascension, has this good influence upon
us, and makes us *in Heart and Mind
thither to ascend, and with him continually
to dwell* by Meditation and Prayer, and
Heavenly Affections, while we are in
this State of Probation here below; he
will certainly come again with Power
and great Glory to receive us to himself;
and crown our Faith and Patience, and
Obedience; and all our pious Labours,
with that which is the Heaven of Hea-
ven; the Eternal Enjoyment of his bliss-
ful presence in the Unity of the Father
and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and
One God, blessed for evermore.

Let us therefore, *lay aside every Weight
that keeps us down and hinders the as-* Heb. 12.1
F f 2 cent

Vol. II. cent of our Souls to that glorious Place where we hope at last to live for ever; and by sincere Repentance get clear of those Sins which here beset and entangle us, and put a stop to our Progress to our Heavenly Home; and then let us run with Patience and Perseverance the Race that is set before us.

- 2. Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endur'd the Cross, despising the Shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. For we are
- 22. now Traveling to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to
- 23. the general Assembly and Church of the first Born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, thro' the Blood
- 24. of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel, which cry'd for vengeance, but this for mercy.

Wherefore we having such good assurance of at length receiving a Kingdom which cannot be mov'd, let us humbly beg of God such a Measure of His Grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably,

bly, with Reverence, and godly Fear. For Vol. II.
if we still continue in sin, when he —28.
has done so much to Redeem us from it ;
instead of being our exceeding great Re-
ward, he'll be a consuming Fire to us, and —29.
make us Feel the dire effects of his just
Displeasure, in a Place of endless Mife-
ry and Woe.

Now the God of Peace, that brought
again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that
great Shepherd of the sheep, thro' the Blood
of the everlasting Covenant, make us per-
fect in every good work to do his will, work-
ing in us that which is well-pleasing in his
sight, that so an entrance may be ministred
unto us abundantly into his everlasting
Kingdom thro' Jesus Christ our Blessed
Lord and Saviour, to whom be Glory for
ever and ever Amen!

*Heb. 13.
20. 21.*

1 Pet. 2.

11.

Vol. II.

HAVING thus, by God's Assistance Finish'd our Meditations upon the most remarkable Passages of our dear Redeemers admirable Life, till his Triumphant *Ascension* from Mount Olivet when he return'd in our Humane Nature to his heavenly Father after he had reconcil'd us to him by his Blood, and *purg'd our sins by the sacrifice of himself,* *John. 17. 5* and resum'd the Glory he had with him before the World was, of which with wondrous Goodness and Compassion he divested himself for us Men, and for our Salvation; how can we close all better, than with Admiration to say with the Psalmist, *Lord what is Man, that thou art thus mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou shouldst thus visit him, and Crown him with Glory and Honour!* *Pf. 8. 4. 5*

That a rebellious ungrateful wicked Creature should be made the Subject of the highest Expressions of the favour and love of God, is so great a Wonder that the Blessed Angels stand amaz'd at it, and admire at the Happiness which we enjoy.

The goodness of God to Man, 'tis true, was always very great; but his Love to him since his Fall, when he least of all deserv'd it, and was rather a
fit

fit Object of his hatred and averſion, was Vol. II.
Love which paſſeth Knowledge.

In his State of Innocence, God lov'd him as the Work of his Hands, one of his moſt excellent Creatures, made after his own Image and Likeneſs, and made ample Proviſion for his happineſs in all reſpects; but when he was ſeduc'd by the Prince of the fall'n Angels, and threw off his Duty and Allegiance to his Maker, and took part with thoſe accuſed Spirits in their Rebellion againſt him, what *then* could be expected but that he ſhould alſo partake of their Miſery? *Some* Punishment, indeed, was immediately inflicted on him, and in which his Poſterity were to have their ſhare; but all things conſider'd that have fall'n out ſince, 'twas no more than juſt enough to keep him humble, and incline him to be penitent, to aſſert God's Honour and Supreme Authority, and the reverence that is due to his Commands; and to make the wonderful Kindneſs and Favour which God intended in proceſs of time to ſhew him, the more endear'd and priz'd.

When *Lucifer* and his Rebellious Legions, Creatures at firſt of far greater excellency in all reſpects than

Vol. II. Man, provok'd their Creator so far, as not only to banish them from Heaven, but to plunge them deep into a most miserable State, which we call *Hell*; we read of no Relentings towards *them*, not the least overtures about their Re-admission to his Favour, nor glimps of Hope that ever it would be, but as St. Jude informs us, *Having left their first glorious and most happy State, they are kept in Everlasting Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgement of the last great Day.*

Jude 6.

But it was not so with Man. For besides the vast difference between *their* Punishment and *ours* at first, which was indeed ev'n nothing in Comparison; (for what is the being driven out of Paradise into a place full of Briars and Thorns, and instead of constant Ease, and Health and Life and Pleasure, to be doom'd to Labour and Sorrow, Diseases and Death; what is this, as bad a change as it is to the Exchange of Heaven for Hell!) if the Early Promise be consider'd of Gods receiving Mankind into his Favour again, and the frequent intimations since that if he was not wanting to himself, he should at length be happier than if he never had sal'n: how infinitely better and more comfortable

table was Man's Case than that of the Vol. II.
laps'd Angels, even before our Saviour's
actual appearing in our Nature to be
our great Atonement !

And now that he has finish'd our Re-
demption, and is return'd to Heaven to
plead our Cause with God in vertue of
his Precious Blood ; how happy are we
beyond all Expression !

And therefore, says the Apostle, in
a holy Triumph, 2 Heb. 16. 17. &c.
*He took not on him the Nature of Angels,
but the seed of Abraham, and was in all
things (Sin only excepted) made like to
those he was pleas'd to call his Brethren,
that as their merciful High Priest, he
might by the Sacrifice of himself make recon-
ciliation for the Sins of the People.*

And how should it raise our admira-
tion to the highest pitch, when we con-
sider, that this our compassionate Me-
diator who became a Publick Victim for
us, was no less than the Eternal Son of
God, manifest in our Flesh, and sub-
mitting to the basest Usage and most
cruel Death, for us vile wretched Sin-
ners !

What can we say ! what Wonder,
what Admiration, what Praise and Love,
what Transports of Holy Joy can be
great

Vol. II. enough for such strange Instances of Mercy and Goodness as these !

That more excellent Creatures, and more *miserable* too, should for ever be past by, and no pitiful Regard had to their sad State, no yernings of the Divine Compassion towards *them* ; but all the Favour and Mercy shewn to *Man* that his own Heart could wish, nay infinitely more, and that in such a wondrous manner too, tho' *he* likewise was in a state of Rebellion against his Maker as well as they : Nay more, that we should not only be pardon'd, but at length admitted into those very Regions of Glory from whence they by their Transgression fell, and shall be banish'd from forever : O how surprizingly strange is this ! And what infinite Reason have we to cry out with the blessed Apostle, *O the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Goodness of God ! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out ! who is able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and highth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth Knowledge ! Lord, what is Man that thou art thus mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou shouldst thus visit him !*

Rom. II.
33.

Let us therefore, no more abuse this

won-

wondrous goodness of God to us, but Vol. II.
be led by it to an immediate and sincere
Repentance; and let his Severity to the
fall'n Angels make us have a care of
provoking his Justice too far, and teach
us how much it concerns us, tho' we
have such infinite reason to rejoice in his
Mercy, yet at the same time to *work out*
our Salvation with fear and trembling.

'Tis thought by some, and seems to
be a very probable Opinion, that the
Angels in Heaven, as well as Man in
Paradise, were at first in a State of Pro-
bation, or Trial; in which, if they be-
hav'd themselves well, they should then
be fix'd in a condition unalterably Glo-
rious and Happy. The Conditions of
which probationary state, what ever
they were, being violated by Lucifer,
and his Confederates, they were for
ever thrown out of Heaven, and doom'd
to a perpetual Exile from it in a State of
Endless Misery; and those blessed and
wise Spirits that continu'd firm in their
Duty, reap'd the happy Fruits of it,
and were establish'd in their blissful
State for ever.

Now if this be so, the circumstances
of the fall of *Adam* and of *Lucifer* being
so much alike, but God's dealing with
them

Vol. II. them *afterwards* so widely different; *Man*, once again being put into a State of Trial, and that with wonderful helps and advantages, towards the recovery of his lost Happiness, and which, upon his continuing faithful to the end should be infinitely increas'd; but the Apostate Spirits not allow'd that Favour: This, in the midst of our Joy, should make us very serious and thoughtful, and engage us to walk with all possible Caution and Circumspection, since notwithstanding all this goodness of God to us, we are but in a State of *Probation* still; and certain Conditions there are to be observ'd by us, which if we fail of performing, and fall a second time, we shall be irrecoverably lost, and thrown into the same sad State with the Devil and his Angels.

And if we let slip this new opportunity, of securing to our selves a happy Eternity, our condition there will be much worse than if Christ had never come into the World, and dy'd to save us.

St. Paul tells us very plainly, 2. Rom. 4, 5. that if this amazing Goodness, and Forbearance, and long suffering of God does not lead us to an effectual Repentance, we shall

shall but *treasure up Wrath against the* Vol. II.
Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the
Righteous Judgment of God.

And what he says to the Gentile Christians, relating to the sad condition of the unbelieving Jews, *V. 20. &c.* may in part be apply'd to what we are now discoursing of; tho' the *fallen Angels* were utterly cast off for *their Rebellion* against God, and *thou* dost still stand fair for Happiness thro' Faith in Jesus, notwithstanding *thine*; yet, *be not high minded, but fear: for if he spar'd not those once glorious and excellent Spirits, take heed, lest for thy repeated and obstinate Impiety, at length he spare not thee.* Behold therefore, the goodness, and severity of God; on them which fell from Heaven severity, but towards thee Goodness, if thou continue in that goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be irrecoverably cut off.

Wherefore to conclude; since by the Mercies of God, thro' the Merits of our Blessed Saviour Jesus, 'tis once again put into our Hand to repair our broken Fortune, and by occasion of our Fall we may raise our selves higher than ever, thro' the amazing Conduct of the only Wise God who has drawn so much
good

Vol. II. good out of Evil; but are assur'd withal, that if this happy opportunity be lost; we are gone beyond recovery, and shall be but the more miserable for not making a good use of the means of Grace and Salvation: Let us seriously ponder and dwell upon these Thoughts, and be so wise, so kind and friendly to our selves, as to be in earnest mindful of our eternal Interest, and now *in this our Day* take care of the *things that belong to our Peace*, before they be hid from our Eyes; lest notwithstanding all the wondrous Things God has done to save us, we finally Perish, thro' our own Default.

And let us Pray Earnestly to him that pity'd us in our undone condition, and rais'd us up with his Almighty Arm; and set our feet upon a Rock, and will order our Goings, and direct our Steps, if we'll be guided by him, till we arrive at his Heavenly Kingdom; that having now put into our Minds good Desires, he would bring the same to good effect, thro' the Merits and Mediation of our dear Redeemer Jesus. Amen!

The

The PRAYER.

Vol. II.

I.

ANd thou, O Blessed God, the Father Of Heaven, Merciful and Gracious beyond Expression, who so lovedst the World, tho' infinitely unworthy, as to send thine only begotten Son to die for Sinners, to the end that all that Believe in him should not Perish but have everlasting Life; have Mercy upon us, for the sake of this thy Beloved!

Thro' him Pardon us, and receive us to thy Favour! And tho' we are unworthy of our selves to offer unto thee any Sacrifice, and rather deserve to be banish'd from thee for ever; yet thro' the All-sufficient Merits of our Crucify'd Saviour's Blood we presume to approach thy most tremendous Majesty, and hope to obtain a Blessing from thee, and that we shall not be sent empty away!

II.

And thou, O God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have pity on thy poor Servants who are call'd by thy Name! Interceed for us we beseech thee, with thy Heavenly Father, and by the continual Exhibition of thy healing Stripes, and Wounds, and bitter sufferings which we are sure are prevalent; move the God of Compassions
in

Vol. II. in Wrath to remember Mercy, and admit us to a participation of what thou hast purchas'd for us with Pains most exquisite upon the Cross!

III.

And thou, O God the Holy Ghost, by whom we are Seal'd to the Day of Redemption, and without whom Nothing is Pure, nothing is Holy, pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy! Let us never be destitute of thy Blessed Motions and Divine Assistance! But send forth thy Light and thy Truth, that we may be directed in the Paths of Righteousness; and by an ardent Love, and careful Imitation, of the great Author and Finisher of our Faith, may at length be conducted to thy Holy Hill, the Place of the Divine Residence, the Heavenly Jerusalem, there with Celestial Raptures to sing the Praises of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all Eternity.

To which most Glorious, and ever Blessed Trinity, three Persons, and one Eternal God, be ascrib'd and given all Honour, and Glory, Adoration and Praise, Love and Obedience, from this time forth for ever, and ever. Amen.



F I N I S.